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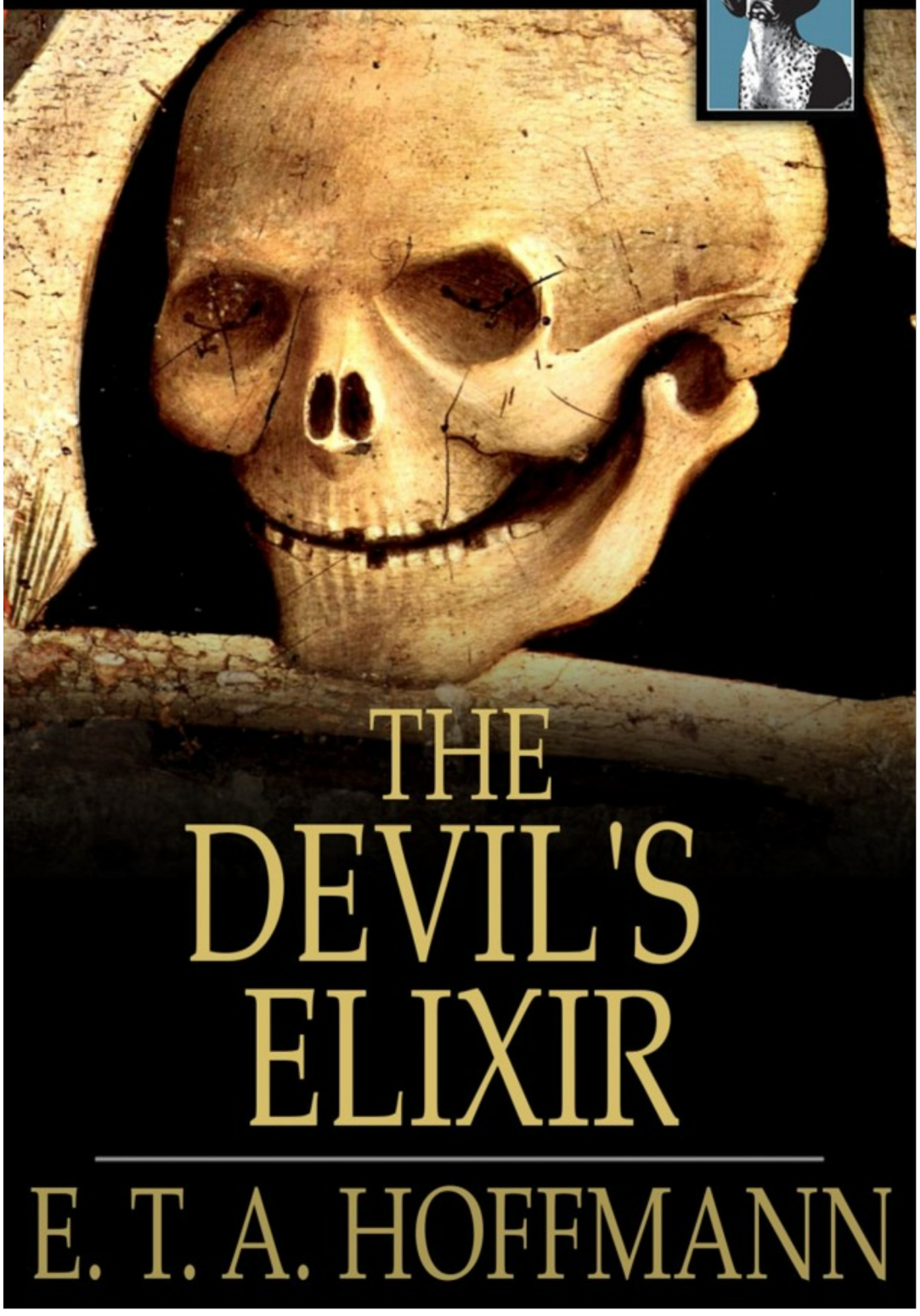

THE DEVIL'S ELIXIR

E. T. A. HOFFMANN

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Contents

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VOLUME I

Chapter I

Chapter II

Chapter III

Chapter IV

Chapter V

Chapter VI

Chapter VII

Chapter VIII

Chapter IX

Chapter X

Chapter XI

Chapter XII

Chapter XIII

Chapter XIV

Chapter XV

Chapter XVI

Chapter XVII

Chapter XVIII

Chapter XIX

Chapter XX

Chapter XXI

Chapter XXII

Chapter XXIII

Chapter XXIV

Chapter XXV

Chapter XXVI

Chapter XXVII

Chapter XXVIII

Chapter XXIX

VOLUME II

Chapter I

Chapter II

Chapter III

Chapter IV

Chapter V

Chapter VI

Chapter VII

Chapter VIII

Chapter IX

Chapter X

Chapter XI

Chapter XII

Chapter XIII

Chapter XIV

Chapter XV

Chapter XVI

Chapter XVII

Chapter XVIII

Chapter XIX

Chapter XX

Chapter XXI

Chapter XXII

Chapter XXIII

Endnotes

VOLUME I

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Chapter I

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My life, from my fourth to my sixteenth year, was spent at a lonely farm-house, on the banks of the river Saale, near the Cistertian Monastery of Kreuzberg. The house, though not large, had once been the residence of a baronial family, that was now extinct, and of whose representatives strange stories were narrated. Of course, therefore, their castle was gloomy; of course, also, said to be haunted, and its immediate environs were in keeping with the character of the principal mansion.

There was, for example, a garden in the old style, with steps and terrace walks, now ruined and neglected; thick hedges of yew and cypress, with trees cut into fantastic shapes, which the present owner had not found leisure, or perhaps had not permission, to destroy. The surrounding country, however, at some distance, was very beautiful, presenting a fine diversity of hill and dale, rock, wood, and water. The situation of the Cistertian Convent, too, is particularly admired; but in the recollections which I am thus commencing, rapid, simple narrative must be my leading object; I have no time for diffuse and verbose description.

Being an only child, I was left much alone, and it is therefore not to be wondered at, that even at this early age, I should have exemplified an undue developement of the faculty of imagination, and betrayed singularities of thought and conduct, with proportionate defects in the more useful qualities of prudence and judgment. It is requisite to observe, however, that I was not born in this neighbourhood, but at the convent of the Holy Lime-Tree in Prussia, of which place, even at this day, I seem to retain the most accurate reminiscence. That I should be able to describe scenes and events which happened in my earliest infancy, need not be considered inexplicable, as I have heard so much of them from the narratives of others, that an impression was of course very powerfully made on my imagination, or rather, the impressions once made, have never been suffered to decay, like cyphers carved on a tree, which some fond lover fails not at frequent intervals to revisit and to renovate. Of my father's rank or station in the world, I know little or nothing. From all that I have heard, he must have been a person of considerable experience and knowledge of life; yet, by various anecdotes which have only of late become intelligible, it appears that my parents, from the enjoyment of affluence and prosperity, had sunk, all at once, into a state of the bitterest poverty and comparative degradation. I learn, moreover, that my father, having been once enticed by stratagems of the Arch Enemy into the commission of a mortal sin, wished, when, in his latter years, the grace of God had brought him to repentance, to expiate his guilt by a penitential pilgrimage from Italy to the convent of the Holy Lime-Tree, in the distant and cold climate of Prussia. On their laborious journey thither, his faithful partner in affliction perceived, for the first time after several years of a married life,

that she was about to become a mother; and notwithstanding his extreme poverty, my father was by this occurrence greatly rejoiced, as it tended to the fulfilment of a mysterious vision, in which the blessed St Bernard had appeared, and promised to him forgiveness and consolation through the birth of a son.

In the convent of the Lime-Tree, my father was attacked by severe illness, and as, notwithstanding his debility, he would on no account forego any of the prescribed devotional exercises, his disease rapidly gained ground, till at last, in mysterious conformity to the words of St Bernard, he died consoled and absolved, almost at the same moment in which I came into the world.

With my first consciousness of existence dawned on my perceptions the beautiful imagery of the cloister and celebrated church of the Lime-Tree. Even at this moment, methinks the dark oak wood yet rustles around me; I breathe once more the fragrance of the luxuriant grass and variegated flowers which were my cradle. No noxious insect, no poisonous reptile, is found within the limits of that sanctuary. Scarce even the buzzing of a fly, or chirping of a grasshopper, interrupts the solemn stillness, diversified only by the pious songs of the monks, who walk about in long solemn processions, accompanied by pilgrims of all nations, waving their censers of consecrated perfume.

Even now, I seem yet vividly to behold in the middle of the church, the stem of the lime-tree cased in silver, that far-famed tree, on which supernatural visitants had placed the miraculous and wonder-working image of the Virgin, while from the walls and lofty dome, the well-known features of Saints and Angels are once more smiling upon me.

In like manner, it appears to me also, as if I had once beheld in the same place the mysterious figure of a tall, grave, and austere-looking man, of whom I was given to understand, that he could be no other but the far-famed Italian painter, who had, in times long past, been here professionally employed. No one understood his language, nor was his real history known to any one of the monks. This much only was certain, that he had, in a space of time incredibly short, filled the church with its richest ornaments, and then, as soon as his work was finished, immediately disappeared, no one could tell how or whither.

Not less vividly could I paint the portrait of a venerable pilgrim, who carried me about in his arms, and assisted me in my childish plays of searching for all sorts of variegated moss and pebbles in the forest. Yet, though the apparition of the painter was certainly real, that of the pilgrim, were it not for its influence on my after life, would seem to me but a dream.

One day this personage brought with him a boy of uncommon beauty, and about my equal in years, with whom I seated myself on the grass, sharing with him my treasured store of moss and pebbles, which he already knew how to form into various regular figures, and above all, into the holy sign of the cross. My mother, meanwhile, sat near us on a stone bench, and the old pilgrim stood behind her, contemplating with mild gravity our infantine employments.

Suddenly, while we were thus occupied, a troop of young people emerged from the thicket, of whom, judging by their dress and whole demeanour, it was easy to decide, that curiosity and idleness, not devotion, had led them to the Lime-Tree. On perceiving us, one of them began to laugh aloud, and exclaiming to his companions, "See there!—See there!—A holy family!—Here at last is something for my portfolio;" with these words he drew out paper and pencils, and set himself as if to sketch our portraits. Hereupon the old pilgrim was violently incensed, "Miserable scoffer!" he exclaimed, "thou forsooth wouldst be an artist, while to thy heart, the inspiration of faith and divine love is yet utterly unknown! But thy works will, like thyself, remain cold, senseless, and inanimate, and in the poverty of thine own soul, like an outcast in the desert, shalt thou perish!"

Terrified by this reproof, the young people hastened away. The old pilgrim also soon afterwards prepared for departure. "For this one day," said he to my mother, "I have been permitted to bring to you this miraculous child, in order that, by sympathy, he might kindle the flames of divine love in your son's heart; but I must now take him from you, nor shall you ever behold either of us in this world again. Your son will prove by nature admirably endowed with many valuable gifts; nor will the lessons which have now been impressed on his mind be from thence ever wholly effaced. Though the passions of his sinful father should boil and ferment in his veins, yet by proper education their influence might be repressed, and he might even raise himself up to be a valiant champion of our holy faith. Let him therefore be a monk!"

With these words he disappeared; and my mother could never sufficiently express how deep was the impression that his warning had left on her mind. She resolved, however, by no means to place any restraint on my natural inclinations, but quietly to acquiesce in whatever destination Providence, and the limited education she was able to bestow, might seem to point out for me.

The interval between this period and the time when my mother, on her homeward journey, stopped at the convent of Kreuzberg, remains a mere blank; not a trace of any event is left to me. The Abbess of the Cistertians (by birth a princess) had been formerly acquainted with my father, and on that account received us very kindly. I recover myself for the first time, when one morning my mother bestowed extraordinary care upon my dress; she also cut and arranged my wildly-grown hair, adorned it with ribbons which she had bought in the town, and instructed me as well as she could how I was to behave when presented at the convent.

At length, holding by my mother's hand, I had ascended the broad marble staircase, and entered a high vaulted apartment, adorned with devotional pictures, in which we found the Lady Abbess. She was a tall, majestic, and still handsome woman, to whom the dress of her order gave extraordinary dignity. "Is this your son?" said she to my mother, fixing on me at the same time her dark and penetrating eyes. Her voice, her dress, her *tout ensemble*,—even, the high vaulted room and strange objects by which I was surrounded, altogether had such an effect on my imagination, that, seized with a kind of horror, I began to weep bitterly. "How is this?" said the Abbess; "are you afraid of me? What is your name, child?"—"Francis," answered my mother.

—"Franciscus!" repeated the Abbess, in a tone of deep melancholy, at the same time lifting me up in her arms, and pressing me to her bosom.

But here a new misfortune awaited us; I suddenly felt real and violent pain, and screamed aloud. The Abbess; terrified, let me go; and my mother, utterly confounded by my behaviour would have directly snatched me up and retired. This, however, our new friend would by no means permit. It was now perceived that a diamond cross, worn by the Princess, had, at the moment when she pressed me in her arms, wounded my neck in such manner, that the impression, in the form of a cross, was already quite visible, and even suffused with blood. "Poor Francis!" said the Abbess, "I have indeed been very cruel to you; but we shall yet, notwithstanding all this, be good friends."—An attendant nun now entered with wine and refreshments, at the sight of which I soon recovered my courage; and at last, seated on the Abbess's lap, began to eat boldly of the sweetmeats, which she with her own hand kindly held to my lips.

Afterwards, when I had, for the first time in my life, also tasted a few drops of good wine, that liveliness of humour, which, according to my mother's account, had been natural to me from infancy, was completely restored. I laughed and talked, to the great delight of the Princess and the nun, who remained in the room. To this moment, I know not how it occurred to my mother, or how she succeeded in leading me on to talk freely to the Abbess about all the wonders of my native monastery, or how, as if supernaturally inspired, I was able to describe the works of the unknown painter as correctly and livelily as if I had comprehended their whole import and excellence. Not contented with this, I went on into all the legends of the saints, as if I had already become intimately acquainted with the records of the church.

The Princess, and even my mother, looked at me with astonishment. At last, "Tell me, child," said the Abbess, "how is it possible that you can have learned all this?"—Without a moment's hesitation, I answered that a miraculous boy, who had been brought to us by the old pilgrim, had explained to me all the paintings in the church—nay, that he himself was able to make beautiful pictures, with moss and pebbles, on the ground; and had not only explained to me their import, but told me many legends of the saints.

The bell now rung for vespers. The nun had packed up and given to me a quantity of sweetmeats in a paper bag, which I grasped and pocketed with great satisfaction. The Abbess then rose from her seat: "Henceforward," said she, turning to my mother, "I shall look upon your son as my chosen *eléve*, and shall provide for him accordingly."—My mother was so much affected by this unexpected generosity, that she could only reply with tears, grasping in silence the hand of the Abbess. We had reached the door on our retreat, when the Princess came after us, took me up once more in her arms, first carefully putting aside the diamond cross, and weeping so that her tears dropped on my forehead, "Franciscus," said she, "be good and pious!" I was moved also, and wept without knowing wherefore.

Chapter II

*

By the assistance of the Abbess we were not long afterwards established at the farm-house already mentioned, and, through her generosity, the small household of my mother soon assumed a more prosperous appearance. I was also well clothed and cared for, enjoying the freedom and tranquillity of a country life, so congenial to childhood; but, above all, I profited in due time by the instructions of the neighbouring village priest, whom, while yet very young, I attended as sacristan at the altar.

How like a fairy dream the remembrance of those happy days yet hovers around me! Alas! like a far distant land, the realm of peace and joy, *home* now lies far far behind me; and when I would look back, a gulf yawns to meet me, by which I am separated from these blissful regions for ever. One lovely form I yet seem to recognize, wandering amid the roseate light of the morning—one that haunted my early dreams, even before I was conscious that such beauty could ever on earth be realized. I beheld her amid the fresh verdure—beneath the fragrant, beaming sun-showers of May—and not less amid the desolate wildness of autumn, when even the beech-trees lost their leaves; and her voice in sweet music rose on me through the moaning sighs of the departing year.

With ardent longing, I strive once more to catch the soothing chords of that angelic voice, to behold the contour of that form, and to meet once more the radiance of her smile—in vain! Alas! are there then barriers over which the strong wings of Love cannot bear him across? Lies not his kingdom in thought, and must thought, too, be subject to slavish limitations? But dark spectral forms rise up around me;—always denser and denser draws together their hideous circle;—they close out every prospect, they oppress my senses with the horrors of reality,—till even that longing, which had been a source of nameless pleasureable pain, is converted into deadly and insupportable torment.

*

The priest was goodness itself. He knew how to fetter my too lively spirit, and to attract my attention in such manner, that I was delighted by his instructions, and made rapid progress in my studies. Even at this moment I can yet recal his calm, contented, and somewhat weather-beaten features. He was in manners simple as a child, perplexed often about trifles, of which the contemptible characters around him were completely *au fait*; yet clear and decisive in judgment on matters of which ordinary characters could have no comprehension.

At this moment, how vividly do I recal, not only his own appearance, but that of his dwelling-house in the village of Heidebach, which town, though small and insignificant, is yet in situation very romantic. The walls of his house were covered up to the roof with vines, which he carefully trained. The interior of his humble habitation was also arranged with the utmost neatness; and behind was a large garden, in which he sedulously worked for recreation at intervals, when not engaged in teaching his scholars, or in his clerical functions.

In all my studies I was also very much assisted and encouraged by that unbounded respect and admiration which I cherished towards the Lady Abbess. Every time that I was to appear in her presence, I proposed to myself that I would shine before her, with my newly acquired knowledge; and as soon as she came into the room, I could only look at her, and listen to her alone. Every word that she uttered remained deeply graven on my remembrance; and through the whole day after I had thus met with her, her image accompanied me wherever I went, and I felt exalted to an extraordinary solemn and devotional mood of mind.

By what nameless feelings have I been agitated, when, during my office of Sacristan, I stood swinging my censer on the steps of the high altar, when the deep full tones of the organ streamed down from the choir, and bore my soul with them as on the waves of a stormy sea! Then in the anthem, above all others, I recognised her voice, which came down like a seraphic warning from Heaven, penetrating my heart, and filling my mind with the highest and holiest aspirations.

But the most impressive of all days, to which for weeks preceding I could not help looking forward with rapture, was that of the Festival of St Bernard, which (he being the tutelary Saint of the Cistertians) was celebrated at the convent with extraordinary grandeur. Even on the day preceding, multitudes of people streamed out of the town, and from the surrounding country. Encamping themselves on the beautiful level meadows by which Kreuzberg is surrounded, day and night the lively assemblage were in commotion. In the motley crowd were to be found all varieties of people—devout pilgrims in foreign habits singing anthems—peasant lads flirting with their well-dressed mistresses—monks, who, with folded arms, in abstract contemplation, gazed up to Heaven—and whole families of citizens, who comfortably unpacked and enjoyed their well-stored baskets of provisions on the grass. Mirthful catches, pious hymns, groans of the penitent, and laughter of the merry, rejoicing, lamentation, jesting, and prayer, sounded at once in a strange stupifying concert through the atmosphere.

If, however, the convent bell rung, then, far as the eye could reach, the multitude were at once fallen on their knees. Confusion was at an end, and only the hollow murmurs of prayer interrupted the solemn stillness. When the last sounds of the bell had died away, then the merry crowds, as before, streamed about on their varied occupations, and of new the rejoicing, which for a few minutes had been interrupted, was eagerly resumed.

On St Bernard's day, the Bishop himself, who resided in the neighbouring town, officiated in divine service at the church of the convent. He was attended by all the inferior clergy of his diocese; his *capelle*, or choir, performed the music on a kind of temporary tribune, erected on one side of the high altar, and adorned with rich and costly hangings. Even now, the feelings which then vibrated through my bosom are not decayed. When I think of that happy period, which only too soon past away, they revive in all their youthful freshness. With especial liveliness I can still remember the notes of a certain *Gloria*; which composition being a great favourite with the Princess, was frequently performed.

When the Bishop had intoned the first notes of this anthem, and the powerful voices of the choir thundered after him, "*Gloria in excelsis Deo*," did it not seem as if the painted clouds over the high altar were rolled asunder, and as if by a divine miracle the cherubim and seraphim came forward into life, moved, and spread abroad their powerful wings, hovering up and down, and praising God with song and supernatural music?

I sank thereafter into the most mysterious mood of inspired devotion. I was borne through resplendent clouds into the far distant regions of home. Through the fragrant woods of the Lime-Tree Monastery, I once more heard the music of angelic voices. From thickets of roses and lilies, the miraculous boy stepped forward to meet me, and said, with a smile, "Where have you been so long, Franciscus? See, I have a world of beautiful flowers, and will give them all to you, if you will but stay with me and love me!"

After divine service, the nuns, with the Abbess at their head, held a solemn procession through the aisles of the church and convent. She was in the full dress of her order, wearing the Insul, and carrying the silver shepherd's-staff in her hand. What sanctity, what dignity, what supernatural grandeur, beamed from every look, and animated every gesture, of this admirable woman! She herself impersonized the triumphant church, affording to pious believers the assurance of blessing and protection. If by chance her looks fell on me, I could have thrown myself prostrate before her in the dust.

When the ceremonies of the day were completely brought to an end, the attendant clergy, including the choir of the Bishop, were hospitably entertained in the refectory. Several friends of the convent, civil officers, merchants from the town, etc., had their share in this entertainment; and by means of the Bishop's choir-master, who had conceived a favourable opinion of me, and willingly had me beside him, I also was allowed to take my place at the table.

If before I had been excited by mysterious feelings of devotion, no less now did convivial life, with its varied imagery, gain its full influence over my senses. The guests enjoyed themselves with great freedom, telling stories, and laughing at their own wit, during which the bottles of old wine were zealously drained, until, at a stated hour in the evening, the carriages of the dignitaries were at the gate, and all, in the most orderly manner, took their departure.

Chapter III

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I was now in my sixteenth year, when the priest declared that I was qualified to begin the study of the higher branches of theology, at the college of the neighbouring town. I had fully determined on the clerical life, by which resolution my mother was greatly delighted, as she perceived that the mysterious hints of the pilgrim were intimately connected with my father's vision of St Bernard; and by this resolution of mine, she for the first time believed, that his soul was fully absolved, and saved from the risk of eternal destruction. The Princess, too, approved my intentions, and repeated her generous promises of support and assistance.

Though the town of Königswald was so near, that we beheld its towers in the back ground of the landscape, and though bold walkers frequently came from thence on foot to our convent, yet to me this first separation from the Abbess, whom I regarded with such veneration,—from my kind mother, whom I tenderly loved,—and the good old priest, was very painful. So true it is, that even the shortest step out of the immediate circle of one's best friends, is equal, in effect, to the remotest separation. Even the Princess was on this occasion agitated to an extraordinary degree, and her voice faltered while she pronounced over me some energetic words of admonishment. She presented me with an ornamental rosary, and a small prayer-book, with fine illuminations. She then gave me a letter of recommendation to the Prior of the Capuchin Convent in Königswald, whom she advised me directly to visit, as he would be prepared to afford me whatever advice or aid I could require.

There are certainly few situations so beautiful as that of the Capuchin Monastery, right before the eastern gates of Königswald. The flourishing and extensive gardens, with their fine prospect towards the mountains, seemed to me at every visit more and more attractive. Here it became afterwards my delight to wander in deep meditation, reposing now at this, now at that group of finely grown trees; and in this garden, when I went to deliver my letter of recommendation from the Abbess, I met, for the first time, the Prior Leonardus.

The natural politeness of the Superior was obviously increased when he had read through the letter, and he said so much in praise of the Princess, whom he had formerly known at Rome, that by this means alone he directly won my affections. He was then surrounded by his brethren, and it was easy to perceive at once the beneficial effects of his arrangements and mode of discipline in the monastery.

The same cheerfulness, amenity, and composure of spirit, which were so striking in the Prior, spread their influence also through the brethren. There was nowhere visible the slightest trace of ill humour, or of that inwardly-

corroding reserve, which is elsewhere to be found in the countenances of Monks. Notwithstanding the severe rules of his order, devotional exercises were to the Prior Leonardus more like a necessary indulgence of a divine soul aspiring to Heaven, than penitential inflictions to efface the stains of mortal frailty. And he knew so well how to instil the same principles among his brethren, that in their performance of every duty, to which they were by their vows subjected, there prevailed a liveliness and good humour, which even in this terrestrial sphere gave rise to a new and higher mood of existence.

The Prior even allowed and approved a certain degree of intercourse with the world, which could not but be advantageous for the monks. The rich gifts which from all quarters were presented to the monastery, rendered it possible to entertain, on certain days, the friends and patrons of the institution, in the refectory.

Then, in the middle of the banquet-hall was spread a large table, at which were seated the Prior Leonardus and his guests. The brethren, meanwhile, remained at a small narrow board, stretching along the walls, contenting themselves with the humblest fare, and coarsest utensils, while, at the Prior's table, all was elegantly served on silver, glass, and porcelain; and even on fast-days the cook of the convent could prepare meagre dishes in such a manner, that they seemed to the guests highly luxurious. They themselves provided wine; and thus the dinners at the Capuchin Convent presented a friendly intercourse of spiritual with profane characters, which could not fail to be beneficial to both parties.

Those who were too eagerly occupied in worldly pursuits, were obliged to confess, that here, by a new mode of life, in direct opposition to their own, quiet and composure were to be obtained; nay, they might conclude, that the more the soul is in this world elevated above terrestrial considerations, the more it becomes capable of enjoyment. On the other hand, the monks gained a knowledge of life, which otherwise would have remained from them wholly veiled, and which supplied important *materiel* for contemplation, enabling them many times more clearly to perceive, that, without the aid of some divine principle to support the mind, all in this world becomes "weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable."

Over all the brethren, highly exalted, both in regard to sacred and profane accomplishments, stood the Prior Leonardus. Besides that he was looked on as a great theologian, and consulted on the most difficult questions, he was, much more than could have been expected from a monk, also a man of the world. He spoke the French and Italian languages with fluency and elegance, and on account of his extraordinary versatility, he had formerly been employed on weighty diplomacies.

At the time when I knew him first, he was already advanced in years; but though his hair was white, his eyes yet gleamed with youthful fire—and the agreeable smile which hovered on his lips was the surest evidence of his inward serenity and activity of mind. The same grace which prevailed in his discourse, regulated every gesture, and his figure, even in the unbecoming dress of his order, appeared to extraordinary advantage.

There was not a single individual among the inhabitants of the convent, who had not come into it from his own free choice. But had it been otherwise, as, for example, in the case of unfortunate criminals, who came thither as to a place of refuge from persecution, the penitence prescribed by Leonardus was but the short passage to recovered repose; and reconciled with himself, without heeding the world or its follies, the convert would, while yet living on earth, have become elevated in mind over all that is terrestrial. This unusual tendency of monachism, had been learned by Leonardus in Italy, where the mode of education, and all the views of a religious life, are much more cheerful than among the Catholics of Germany.

Leonardus conceived a very favourable opinion of my talents; he instructed me in Italian and French; but it was especially the great variety of books which he lent to me, and his agreeable conversation, which contributed most to my improvement. Almost the whole time which could be spared from my studies in the College, was spent in the Capuchin Convent; and my inclination towards a monastic life became always more and more determined. I disclosed to the Prior my wishes in this respect; but, without directly dissuading me, he advised me at any rate to wait for a few years, during which time I might look around me in the world. As to society, since I came into the town, I had, by means of the Bishop's choir-master, found myself on that score by no means deficient, but in every party, especially if women were present, I had uniformly found myself so disagreeably embarrassed, that even this alone, independent of my disposition to solitude and contemplation, seemed to decide, that I was by nature destined for a monk.

One day, the Prior spoke with me at great length on the danger of risking too early a decision on a mode of life, which involves so many requisites. "Is it possible," said he, "that at so early an age, you are prepared to renounce all the delusive pleasures of this world? If so, but not otherwise, you may then embrace the duties of monachism. Are you thoroughly convinced, that you have formed no attachment,—that you wish for no enjoyments, but those which the mysterious influences of an existence devoted to voluntary suffering can bestow?"

He fixed on me his dark penetrating eyes, and I was obliged to cast mine on the ground, and remain without answering a word; for at that moment a form, which had been long banished from my recollection, stepped forward to the mind's eye in colours more than ever lively and distracting.

The choir-master had a sister, who, without being an absolute beauty, was yet in the highest bloom of youth, and especially on account of her figure, was what is called a very charming girl. One morning, having formed some other engagements, I had gone at an earlier hour than usual to receive my lesson in music at the choir-master's house, stepped without hesitation into his lodgings, expecting to find him alone, and wholly unconscious that the apartment was used as a dressing-room (or, as it happened on this occasion, as an *un*dressing-room) by Mademoiselle Therese, whom, instead of her brother, I now discovered. So utterly was I confounded, that I stood motionless for a few seconds, without retiring or advancing. My heart beat,

my limbs tottered—I could hardly breathe—But when Therese, with her usual *naiveté* and *nonchalance*, had recourse to a large shawl, then came forward without the least confusion, even offered me her hand, and asked what was the matter, and why I looked so pale—this increased my embarrassment tenfold, so that I had almost fainted.

It was a fortunate relief when the door of the adjoining room opened, and the choir-master made his appearance. But never had I struck such false chords, or sung so completely out of tune, as on that day. Afterwards I was pious enough to believe that the whole was a temptation of the devil, and thought myself very fortunate in having, by ascetic exercises, driven him out of the field.

Now, however, these questions of the Prior, though his intentions were very praiseworthy, revived the lost image in tenfold strength. I blushed deeply, and said not a word. "I see, my dear son," resumed the Prior, "that you have understood me; you are yet free from the vices of artifice and concealment, nor do you cherish an undue confidence in yourself. Heaven protect you from the temptations of this life! Its enjoyments are but of short duration, and one may well say, that there rests on them a curse. In possession they expire; and what is worse, leave behind them a disgust, a disappointment, a bluntness of the faculties for all that is truly praiseworthy and exalted, so that the better and spiritual attributes of our nature are at last utterly destroyed!"

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Notwithstanding my endeavours to forget both the questions of the Prior, and the image to which they had given rise, yet I could in this by no means succeed; and though formerly I had been tolerably composed, even in the presence of Therese, yet now I was obliged with the utmost care to avoid every meeting. Even the very thoughts of her distracted my attention completely; and this appeared to me so much the more sinful, as I could not disguise from myself that such thoughts were attended with pleasure.

The adventure of one evening, however, was soon to determine all this. The choir-master invited me, as he had often done before, to a music party at his house. On entering the room, I perceived that there were many other young ladies besides Mamselle Therese, and that she was on this occasion dressed more becomingly and elegantly than I had ever seen her. I would willingly have excused myself and fled, but it was now too late. An irresistible longing drew me towards her. I was as if spell-bound, and through the evening stationed myself near her, happy if by accident I came into momentary contact with this enchantress, though it were but to touch the hem of her garment.

Of all this she appeared by no means inobservant, nor did it seem to displease her. The adventures of the night, however, were drawing to a close. She had sat long at the harpsichord, but at length rose, and went towards the window. One of her gloves was left on the chair. This, believing myself unobserved, I directly took possession of, first pressing it to my lips, and then placing it in my bosom. One young lady, however, (who, by the by, was my utter

aversion,) had not failed to notice this *etourderie*. She rose directly from her station at the tea-table, and went to Therese, who was standing with another *demoiselle* at the window. She whispered something to Therese, who immediately began to smile. The looks of all three were directed towards me. They tittered and laughed all together. I believed it was in scorn and mockery, which to my feelings was insupportable.

I was as if annihilated. The blood flowed ice-cold through my veins. Losing all self-possession I left the room—rushed away into the college, and locked myself up in my cell. I threw myself in despair and rage upon the floor. Tears of anguish and disappointment gushed from my eyes. I renounced—I cursed the girl and myself; then prayed and laughed alternately like a madman. Tittering voices of scorn and mockery rose, and sounded gibbering all around me. I was in the very act of throwing myself out of the window, but by good luck the iron bars hindered me. It was not till the morning broke that I was more tranquil; but I was firmly resolved never to see her any more, and, in a word, to renounce the world.

Chapter IV

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My vocation to the monastic life was thus, according to my own opinion, rendered clear and unalterable. On that very day after the fatal music party, I hastened, as soon as I could escape from my usual studies in the school, to the Capuchin Prior, and informed him that it was my fixed intention directly to begin my noviciate, and that I had already, by letters, announced my design to my mother, and to the Abbess. Leonardus seemed surprised at my sudden zeal, and without being impolitely urgent, he yet endeavoured, by one means or another, to find out what could have led me all at once to this resolve, to which he rightly concluded that some extraordinary event must have given rise.

A painful emotion of shame, which I could not overcome, prevented me from telling the truth. On the other hand, I dwelt, with all the fervour of excitement, on the visions, warnings, and strange adventures of my youth, which all seemed decidedly to point to a monastic retirement. Without in the least disputing the authenticity of the events which I had described, he suggested that I might, nevertheless, have drawn from them false conclusions, as there was no certainty that I had interpreted correctly the warnings, whatever they might be, which I had received.

Indeed, the Prior did not at any time speak willingly of supernatural agency—not even of those instances recorded by inspired writers, so that there were moments in which I had almost set him down for an infidel and a sceptic. Once I emboldened myself so far, as to force from him some decided expressions as to the adversaries of our Catholic faith, who stigmatize all belief of that which cannot be interpreted according to the laws of our corporeal senses, with the name of Superstition. "My son," said Leonardus, "infidelity itself is indeed the worst species of that mental weakness, which, under the name of Superstition, such people ascribe to believers." Thereafter he directly changed the subject to lighter and more ordinary topics of discourse.

Not till long afterwards was I able to enter into his admirable views of the mysteries of our religion, which involves the supernatural communing of our spirits with beings of a celestial order, and was then obliged to confess, that Leonardus, with great propriety, reserved these ideas for students who were sufficiently advanced in years and experience.

I now received a letter from my mother, describing new visions and warnings, such as those to which I had attached so much importance in my conversation with the Prior. She had by this means long since anticipated that the situation of a lay brother would not satisfy my wishes, but that I would make choice of the conventual life. On St Medardus' day, the old Pilgrim from the Holy

Lime-Tree had appeared to her, and had led me by the hand, in the habit of a Capuchin monk. The Princess also completely approved of my resolution; which accordingly was carried as rapidly as possible into effect.

I saw both of them once more before my investiture, which (as, according to my earnest request, the half of my noviciate was dispensed with) very soon followed. In conformity with my mother's last letter, I assumed the conventual name of Medardus.

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The reciprocal confidence and friendship of the brethren with regard to each other—the internal arrangements of the convent—and, in short, the whole mode of life among the Capuchins, appeared to me for a long time exactly as it had done at first. That composure of spirit, which was universally apparent, failed not by sympathy to pour the balm of peace into my soul; and I was visited often by delightful inspirations, especially by faëry dreams, derived from the period of my earliest years in the Convent of the Holy Lime-Tree.

I must not omit to mention, that, during the solemn act of my investiture, I beheld the choir-master's sister. She looked quite sunk in melancholy, and her eyes evidently shone in tears. But the time of temptation was now past and gone; and, perhaps, out of a sinful pride over a triumph too easily won, I could not help smiling, which did not fail to be remarked by a certain monk, named Cyrillus, who at that moment stood near me. "What makes you so merry, brother?" said he.—"When I am renouncing this contemptible world," said I, "and its vanities, ought I not to rejoice?"

It was not to be denied, however, that, at the moment when I pronounced these words, an involuntary feeling of regret vibrated through my inmost heart, and was at direct variance with what I had said. Yet this was the last attack of earthly passion, after which composure of spirit gradually gained complete ascendancy. Oh, had it never departed! But who may trust to the strength of his armour? Who may rely on his own courage, if the supernatural and unseen powers of darkness are combined against him, and for ever on the watch?

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I had now been five years in the convent, when, according to arrangements made by the Prior, the care of the reliquiary chamber was transferred to me from Brother Cyrillus, who was now become old and infirm.

In this room (it was an old grotesque Gothic chamber) there were all sorts of devotional treasures:—bones of the saints, and remnants of their dress—fragments of the cross, &c. etc.—which were preserved in costly glass cases, set in silver, and exposed to view only on certain days, for the edification of the people. When the transfer of duties took place, Brother Cyrillus fully acquainted me with the character of each article, and with the documents proving the miracles which the relics had severally performed.

In regard to talents and literary acquirements, this monk stood next in rank to the Prior Leonardus, for which reason I had the less hesitation in imparting to him freely whatever doubts or difficulties came into my mind. "Must we, then," said I, "absolutely and truly, look upon every article in this collection as that for which it is given out? or, rather, may not avarice and deceit have here foisted in many things as relics of this or that saint, which in reality are base impostures? As, for example, what shall we say if one convent, according to its archives, possesses the whole cross, and yet there are so many fragments in circulation, that (as a brother of our own once irreverently observed) they might, if collected together, supply our house for a whole twelvemonth with fuel?"

"Truly," said Cyrillus, "it does not become us to subject matters of this kind to profane inquiry; but, to speak unreservedly, my opinion is, that very few of the things which are here preserved really are that which they are given out to be. But in this there seems to be no real or important objection whatever. If you will take notice, Brother Medardus, of the doctrine which the Prior and I have always held on these mysteries, you will, on the contrary, perceive that our religion only beams forth more and more in renovated lustre.

"Is it not worthy of admiration, dear Brother, that our Church endeavours in such manner to catch hold of those mysterious links, which in this world connect together sensual and spiritual existences—in other words, so to influence our corporeal frame, that our higher origin and dependance on the Divinity may be more clearly perceived—that we may enjoy, too, the anticipation of that spiritual life, of which we bear the germs within us, and of which a fore-feeling hovers around us, as if like the fanning of seraph's wings?

"What is this or that morsel of wood—that crumbling bone, or fragment of cloth? In themselves they are, of course, worthless; but it is said, that the one was cut from the real cross, and that the others are from the body or garment of a saint. Hence, to the believer, who, without scrutinizing, takes the relic for what it is *said to be*, is directly supplied a source of supernatural excitement, and the most enviable associations. Hence, too, is awoke the spiritual influence of that saint from whom the relic is derived; and he draws consolation and support from that glorified being, whom, with full confidence and faith, he had invoked. By this kind of excitement, also, there is no doubt that many bodily diseases may be overcome, and in this manner, for the most part, are effected the miracles, which, as they often take place before the eyes of the assembled people, it is impossible to dispute or deny."

I recollected immediately many expressions of the Prior which corresponded exactly with those now used by Cyrillus, and began to look on these things which I had formerly regarded as mere toys and baubles, with a degree of respect and devotional veneration. The old monk did not fail to perceive this effect of his own discourse, and went on, with increased zeal and energy, to explain, one by one, the remaining relics.

Chapter V

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At last, Brother Cyrillus had recourse to an old and strangely carved wooden press, which he carefully unlocked, and out of which he took a small square box. "Herein, Brother Medardus," said he, "is contained the most wonderful and mysterious relic of which our convent is possessed. As long as I have been resident here, no one but the Prior and myself has had this box in his hands. Even the other brethren (not to speak of strangers) are unaware of its existence. For my own part, I cannot even touch this casket without an inward shuddering; for it seems to me as if there were some malignant spell, or rather, some living demon, locked up within it, which, were the bonds broken by which this evil principle is now confined, would bring destruction on all who came within its accursed range.

"That which is therein contained is known to have been derived immediately from the Arch-Fiend, at the time when he was still allowed *visibly*, and in personal shape, to contend against the weal of mankind."

I looked at Brother Cyrillus with the greatest astonishment; but without leaving me time to answer, he went on.

"I shall abstain, Brother Medardus, from offering you any opinion of my own on this mysterious affair, but merely relate to you faithfully what our documents say upon the subject. You will find the papers in that press, and can read them afterwards at your leisure.

"The life of St Anthony is already well known to you. You are aware, that in order to be completely withdrawn from the distractions of the world, he went out into the desert, and there devoted himself to the severest penitential exercises. The Devil, of course, followed him, and came often in his way, in order to disturb him in his pious contemplations.

"One evening it happened accordingly, that St Anthony was returning home, and had arrived near his cell, when he perceived a dark figure approaching him rapidly along the heath. As his visitant came nearer, he observed with surprise, through the holes in a torn mantle worn by the stranger, the long necks of oddly-shaped bottles, which of course produced an effect the most extraordinary and grotesque. It was the Devil, who, in this absurd masquerade, smiled on him ironically, and inquired if he would not choose to taste of the Elixir which he carried in these bottles? At this insolence, St Anthony was not even incensed, but remained perfectly calm; for the Enemy, having now become powerless and contemptible, was no longer in a condition to venture a real combat, but must confine himself to scornful words.

"The Saint, however, inquired for what reason he carried about so many bottles in that unheard-of manner.

"'For this very reason,' said the Devil, 'that people may be induced to ask me the question; for as soon as any mortal meets with me, he looks on me with astonishment, makes the same inquiry that you have done, and, in the next place, cannot forbear desiring to taste, and try what sort of elixirs I am possessed of. Among so many bottles, if he finds one which suits his taste, and *drinks it out*, and becomes drunk, he is then irrecoverably mine, and belongs to me and my kingdom for ever.'

"So far the story is the same in all legends, though some of them add, that, according to the Devil's confession, if two individuals should drink out of the same flask, they would henceforth become addicted to the same crimes, possessing a wonderful reciprocity of thoughts and feelings, yet mutually and unconsciously acting for the destruction of each other. By our own manuscripts, it is narrated farther, that when the Devil went from thence, he left some of his flasks on the ground, which St Anthony directly took with him into his cave, fearing that they might fall into the way of accidental travellers, or even deceive some of his own pupils, who came to visit him in that retirement. By chance, so we are also told, St Anthony once opened one of these bottles, out of which there arose directly a strange and stupifying vapour, whereupon all sorts of hideous apparitions and spectral phantoms from hell had environed the Saint, in order to terrify and delude him. Above all, too, there were forms of women, who sought to entice him into shameless indecencies. These altogether tormented him, until, by constant prayer, and severe penitential exercises, he had driven them again out of the field.

"In this very box there is now deposited a bottle of that kind, saved from the relics of St Anthony; and the documents thereto relating, are so precise and complete, that the fact of its having been derived from the Saint is hardly to be doubted. Besides, I can assure you, Brother Medardus, that so often as I have chanced to touch this bottle, or even the box in which it is contained, I have been struck with a mysterious horror. It seems to me also, as if I smelt a peculiar, odoriferous vapour, which stuns the senses, and the effects of which do not stop there, but utterly rob me of composure of spirit afterwards, and distract my attention from devotional exercises.

"Whether I do or not believe in this immediate intercourse with the devil in visible shape, yet, that such distraction proceeds from the direct influence of some hostile power, there can be no doubt. However, I overcame this gradually by zealous and unceasing prayer. As for you, Brother Medardus, whose fervent imagination will colour all things with a strength beyond that of reality, and who, in consequence of youth, also will be apt to trust too much to your own power of resistance, I would earnestly impress on you this advice,—'Never, or at least, for many years, to open the box; and in order that it may not tempt and entice you, to put it as much as possible out of your reach and sight.'"

Hereupon Brother Cyrillus shut up the mysterious Box in the press from which it had come, and consigned over to me a large bunch of keys, among

which that of the formidable press had its place. The whole story had made on me a deep impression, and the more that I felt an inward longing to contemplate the wonderful relic, the more I was resolved to render this to myself difficult, or even impossible.

When Cyrillus left me, I looked over once more, one by one, the treasures thus committed to my charge; I then returned to my cell, and untied the key of the Devil's press from the bunch to which it belonged, and hid it deeply among the papers in my writing-desk.

One temptation, said I to myself, I have already overcome. I have emancipated myself from the thraldom of Therese. Never more shall the Devil, by his insidious artifices, gain ascendancy over me!

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Among the professors in the College, there was one, distinguished as an extraordinary orator. Every time that he preached, the church was filled to overflowing. His words, like a stream of lava fire, bore with him the hearts and souls of his hearers, and kindled in every one the most fervid and unaffected devotion.

The inspiration of his discourses animated me, among others, in a pre-eminent degree; and although I certainly looked on this extraordinary man as an especial favourite of Heaven, and gifted with no every-day talents, yet it seemed as if some mighty warning voice spoke within me, commanding me to rouse from my slumbers,—to go and do likewise!

After I had returned from hearing him, I used to preach with great energy in my own cell, giving myself up to the inspiration of the moment, till I had succeeded in arresting and embodying my thoughts in proper words, which I then committed to paper.

The brother who used to preach in the convent now became obviously weaker. Wholly destitute of energy, like a half-dried rivulet in summer, his discourses dragged laboriously and feebly along; and an intolerable diffuseness of language, resulting from the want of thought, rendered his discourses so long and tedious, that most of his hearers, as if lulled by the unceasing clapper of a mill, long before he concluded, fell asleep, and were only roused after he had pronounced "amen," by the sound of the anthem and the organ.

The Prior Leonardus was indeed an admirable orator; but he was at this time afraid to preach, as, on account of his advanced age, the exertion fatigued him too much: and except the Prior, there was no one in the convent who could supply the place of the superannuated brother.

The Prior one day happened to converse with me on this state of affairs, which he deplored, as it deprived the monastery of many pious visitors. I took courage, and told him that I had many times felt an inward call to the pulpit, and had even written several discourses.

Accordingly, he desired to see some specimens from my manuscripts, and was with them so highly pleased, that he earnestly exhorted me, on the next holiday, to make a trial in public, in which attempt I ran the less risk of failure, being by nature gifted with an expressive cast of features, and a deep, sonorous tone of voice. As to the subsidiary acquirements, of action and of delivery, the Prior promised himself to instruct me.

Chapter VI

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The eventful holiday soon arrived. The church was unusually crowded, and it was not without considerable trepidation that I mounted the pulpit. At the commencement, I remained timidly faithful to my manuscript; and Leonardus told me that I had spoken with a faltering voice, which, however, exactly corresponded with certain plaintive and pathetic considerations with which I had begun my discourse, and which, therefore, was interpreted by most of my auditors into a very skilful example of rhetorical *tact*.

Soon afterwards, however, it seemed as if my inward mind were gradually lighted up by the glowing fire of supernatural inspiration. I thought no more of the manuscript, but gave myself up to the influence of the moment. I felt how every nerve and fibre was attuned and energized. I heard my own voice thunder through the vaulted roof. I beheld, as if by miracle, the halo of divine light shed around my own elevated head and outstretched arms. By what means I was enabled to preserve connection in my periods, or to deliver my conceptions with any degree of logical precision, I know not, for I was carried out of myself. I could not afterwards have declared whether my discourse had been short or long—the time past like a dream! With a grand euphonical sentence, in which I concentrated, as if into one *focus*, all the blessed doctrines that I had been announcing, I concluded my sermon; of which the effect was such as had been in the convent wholly unexampled.

Long after I had ceased to speak, there were heard through the church the sounds of passionate weeping, exclamations of heartfelt rapture, and audible prayers. The brethren paid me their tribute of the highest approbation. Leonardus embraced me, and named me the pride of their institution!

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With unexampled rapidity my renown was spread abroad; and henceforward, on every Sunday or holiday, crowds of the most respectable inhabitants of the town used to be assembled, even before the doors were opened, while the church, after all, was found insufficient to hold them. By this homage, my zeal was proportionably increased. I endeavoured more and more to give to my periods the proper rounding, and to adorn my discourses throughout, with all the flowers of eloquence. I succeeded always more and more in fettering the attention of my audience, until my fame became such, that the attention paid to me was more like the homage and veneration due to a saint, than approbation bestowed on any ordinary mortal. A kind of religious delirium now prevailed through the town. Even on ordinary week days, and on half-holidays, the inhabitants came in crowds, merely to see Brother Medardus, and to hear him speak, though but a few words.

Thus vanity gradually, by imperceptible, but sure approaches, took possession of my heart. Almost unconsciously, I began to look upon myself as the *one elect*,—the pre-eminently *chosen* of Heaven. Then the miraculous circumstances attending my birth at the Lime-Tree; my father's forgiveness of a mortal crime; the visionary adventures of my childhood;—all seemed to indicate that my lofty spirit, in immediate commerce with supernatural beings, belonged not properly to earth, but to Heaven, and was but suffered, for a space, to wander here, for the benefit and consolation of mortals! It became, according to my own judgment, quite certain, that the venerable old Pilgrim, together with the wonderful boy that he had brought with him, had been *supernatural* visitants,—that they had descended on earth, for the express purpose of greeting me as the chosen saint, who was destined for the instruction of mankind, to sojourn transiently among them.

But the more vividly all these ideas came before me, the more did my present situation become oppressive and disagreeable. That unaffected cheerfulness and inward serenity which had formerly brightened my existence, was completely banished from my soul. Even all the good-hearted expressions of the Prior, and friendly behaviour of the monks, awoke within me only discontent and resentment. By their mode of conduct, my vanity was bitterly mortified. In me they ought clearly to have recognised the chosen saint who was above them so highly elevated. Nay, they should even have prostrated themselves in the dust, and implored my intercession before the throne of Heaven!

I considered them, therefore, as beings influenced by the most deplorable obduracy and refractoriness of spirit. Even in my discourses I contrived to interweave certain mysterious allusions. I ventured to assert, that now a wholly new and mighty revolution had begun, as with the roseate light of morning, to dawn upon the earth, announcing to pious believers, that one of the specially elect of Heaven had been sent for a space to wander in sublunary regions. My supposed mission I continued to clothe in mysterious and obscure imagery, which, indeed, the less it was understood, seemed the more to work like a charm among the people.

Leonardus now became visibly colder in his manner, avoiding to speak with me, unless before witnesses. At last, one day, when we were left alone in the great *allée* of the convent garden, he broke out—"Brother Medardus, I can no longer conceal from you, that for some time past your whole behaviour has been such as to excite in me the greatest displeasure. There has arisen in your mind some adverse and hostile principle, by which you have become wholly alienated from a life of pious simplicity. In your discourses, there prevails a dangerous obscurity; and from this darkness many things appear ready, if you dared utter them, to start forward, which if plainly spoken, would effectually separate you and me for ever. To be candid—at this moment you bear about with you, and betray that unalterable curse of our sinful origin, by which even every powerful struggle of our spiritual energies is rendered a means of opening to us the realms of destruction, whereinto we thoughtless mortals are, alas! too apt to go astray!

"The approbation, nay, the idolatrous admiration, which has been paid to you by the capricious multitude, who are always in search of novelty, has dazzled you, and you behold yourself in an artificial character, which is not your own, but a deceitful phantom, which will entice you rapidly into the gulf of perdition. Return, then, into yourself, Medardus—renounce the delusion which thus besets and overpowers you! I believe that I thoroughly understand this delusion,—at least, I am well aware of its effects. Already have you lost utterly that calmness and complacence of spirit, without which there is, on this earth, no hope of real improvement. Take warning, then, in time! Resist the fiend who besets you! Be once more that good-humoured and open-hearted youth whom with my whole soul I loved!"

Tears involuntarily flowed from the eyes of the good Prior while he spoke thus. He had taken my hand, but now letting it fall, he departed quickly without waiting for any answer.

His words had indeed penetrated my heart; but, alas! the impressions that they had left were only those of anger, distrust, and resentment. He had spoken of the approbation, nay, the admiration and respect, which I had obtained by my wonderful talents; and it became but too obvious that only pitiful envy had been the real source of that displeasure, which he so candidly expressed towards me.

Silent, and wrapt up within myself, I remained at the next meeting of the brethren, a prey to devouring indignation. Still buoyed up and excited by the wild inspirations which had risen up within me, I continued through whole days and long sleepless nights my laborious contrivances how I might best commit to paper (without a too candid avowal of my self-idolatry) the glorious ideas that crowded on my mind.

Meanwhile, the more that I became estranged from Leonardus and the monks, the better I succeeded in attracting the homage of the people; and my discourses never failed to rivet their attention.

On St Anthony's day this year, it happened that the church was more than ever thronged—in such manner, that the vestry-men were obliged to keep the doors open, in order that those who could not get in might at least hear me from without. Never had I spoken more ardently, more impressively,—in a word, with more *onction*. I had related, as usual, many wonderful anecdotes from the lives of the saints, and had demonstrated in what degree their examples, though not imitable in their fullest extent, might yet be advantageously applied in real life. I spoke, too, of the manifold arts of the Devil, to whom the fall of our first parents had given the power of seducing mankind; and involuntarily, before I was aware, the stream of eloquence led me away into the legend of the Elixir, which I wished to represent as an ingenious allegory.

Then suddenly, my looks, in wandering through the church, fell upon a tall haggard figure, who had mounted upon a bench, and stood in a direction nearly opposite to me, leaning against a pillar. He was in a strange foreign garb, with a dark violet-coloured mantle, of which the folds were twined

round his crossed arms. His countenance was deadly pale; but there was an unearthly glare in his large black staring eyes, which struck into my very heart. I trembled involuntarily—a mysterious horror pervaded my whole frame. I turned away my looks, however, and, summoning up my utmost courage, forced myself to continue my discourse. But, as if constrained by some inexplicable spell of an enchanter—as if fascinated by the basilisk's eyes—I was always obliged to look back again, where the man stood as before, changeless and motionless, with his large spectral eyes glaring upon me.

On his high wrinkled forehead, and in the lineaments of his down-drawn mouth, there was an expression of bitter scorn, of disdain mixed almost with hatred. His whole figure presented something indescribably and supernaturally horrid, such as belonged not to this life. The whole truth now came on my remembrance. It was, it could be no other, than the unknown miraculous painter from the Lime-Tree, whose form, beheld in infancy, had never wholly vanished from my mind, and who now haunted me like the visible impersonification of that hereditary guilt by which my life was overshadowed.

I felt as if seized on and grappled with by ice-cold talons: My periods faltered;—my whole discourse became always more and more confused. There arose a whispering and murmuring in the church;—but the stranger remained utterly unmoved; and the fixed regard of his eyes never for a moment relented. At last, in the full paroxysm—the climax of terror and despair—I screamed aloud—"Thou revenant!—Thou accursed sorcerer!—Away with thee from hence!—Begone! for I myself am he!—I am the blessed St Anthony!"

Chapter VII

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From that moment, I remember nothing more, until, on recovering from the state of utter unconsciousness into which I fell with these words, I found myself in my cell, on my couch, and carefully watched by Cyrillus. The frightful vision of the unknown stood yet vividly before mine eyes. Cyrillus, however, laboured to convince me, that this had been but an illusory phantom of my own brain—heated by the zeal and ardour of my discourse.

But the more that he exerted himself for this purpose, the more deeply did I feel shame and repentance at my own behaviour in the pulpit—As to the audience, they, as I afterwards understood, concluded that a sudden madness had seized upon me; for which notion, my last exclamation had, no doubt, afforded them abundant reason.

I was in spirit utterly crushed and annihilated. Shut up like a prisoner in my cell, I subjected myself to the severest penitential inflictions; and strengthened myself by zealous prayer for contention with the adversary, who had appeared to me, even on consecrated ground, and only in malice and mockery had put on the features and garb of the miraculous painter of the Lime-Tree.

No one but myself would acknowledge that he had seen the man in the violet-coloured mantle; and, with his usual kindness, the Prior Leonardus, very zealously spread a report, that my conduct had arisen merely from the first attack of a severe nervous fever, by which I had been so frightfully borne away in my discourse, and confused in my ideas. Indeed, without any pretence, I was, for a long time, extremely ill, and this too for several weeks after I had again resumed the ordinary conventual mode of life.

However, I at last undertook once more to mount the pulpit;—but, tormented by my own inward agitation, and still haunted by the restless remembrance of that horrid pale spectre, I was scarcely able to speak connectedly, much less to give myself up as before to the spontaneous fire of eloquence. My sermons, on the contrary, were now stiff, constrained, and laboriously patched up from disjointed fragments. The audience bewailed the loss of my rhetorical powers,—gradually gave up their attendance,—and the superannuated brother who had formerly preached, and who was now much superior to me, again took his place; so that I was utterly superseded.

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After some time lost in this manner, it happened, that a certain young Count, then on his travels, (under a feigned name,) with his tutor, came to the monastery, and desired to see whatever we had to boast of that was rare and

curious. I was accordingly obliged to open the reliquary chamber,—the gleam of a fine sunset shone upon the strange furniture of this ghastly old room, and the visitors, with an ironical smile on their features, marched in. To my vexation, I was left with them alone; for the Prior, who had till now been with us, was called away to attend a sick person in the town of Königswald.

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Gradually I had got through all that I intended to shew, and had minutely described every article, when, by chance, the Count's eye fell upon the curious old cabinet, adorned with grotesque carvings, in which was deposited the box with the Devil's Elixir.

Though for some time I dexterously evaded their questions, yet, at last, the Count and his tutor, joining together, urged me so far, that I could not avoid telling them, at once, the legends relating to the contents of this cabinet. In short, I repeated to them the whole story of St Anthony and the devil, nor (unluckily) did I leave out the warning which brother Cyrillus had given me, as to the danger of opening the box, or even the cabinet. Notwithstanding that the Count was of the Catholic religion, both he and his tutor seemed to have little or no faith in sacred legends. They both indulged in an exuberance of odd fancies and witty remarks on this comical devil, who had carried about bottles under his ragged mantle. At last, the tutor thought proper to assume a serious demeanour, and spoke as follows:—

"Do not, reverend sir, be offended with the levity of us men of the world. Be assured, on the contrary, that we both honour the Saints, and look on them as the most admirable examples of mortals inspired by religion, who, for the salvation of their souls, and edification of mankind, sacrificed all the enjoyments of life, and even life itself. But as to legends and stories such as you have just now related, in my opinion, these are, though not always, yet in many instances, (of which this is one,) only ingenious allegories, which, by misconception, are absurdly supposed to be histories of events that took place in real life."

With these words, the tutor had suddenly drawn aside the sliding cover of the box, and taken out the black strangely-formed bottle. Now, indeed, as brother Cyrillus had remarked to me, there spread itself abroad a strong odour, which appeared, however, anything rather than stupifying. It was, in a high degree, agreeable, generous, and refreshing.

"Hah!" exclaimed the Count, "now would I take any bet, that the Devil's Elixir is neither more nor less, than excellent old wine of Syracuse!"

"Unquestionably," said the tutor; "and if the bottle really came from the posthumous property of St Anthony, then, brother, you are more fortunate than the King of Naples, who, on one occasion, expected to be able to taste real old Roman wine; but, from the bad custom among the Romans, of pouring oil into the necks of their bottles instead of using corks, was debarred that gratification.

"Though this bottle," continued he, "is by no means so old as the Augustan age, yet, having been St Anthony's, it is certainly by far the most ancient that we are likely to meet with; and, therefore, reverend sir, you would, in my opinion, do well to apply the relic to your own use, and to sip up its contents with good faith and courage."

"Undoubtedly," resumed the Count, "this old Syracusan wine would pour new strength into your veins, and put to flight that bodily indisposition under which, reverend sir, you now seem to labour."

Hereupon the tutor pulled a cork-screw from his pocket, and, notwithstanding all my protestations to the contrary, opened the bottle. It seemed to me, as if, upon drawing the cork, a blue flame ascended into the air, which directly afterwards vanished. More powerfully then, the vaporous odour mounted out of the flask, and spread itself through the chamber!

The tutor tasted in the first place, and cried out with rapture—"Admirable, admirable Syracusan! In truth, the wine cellar of St Anthony was by no means a bad one; and if the devil really was his butler, then certainly he had no such evil intentions towards the Saint as people commonly suppose!—Now, my Lord Count, taste the wine!"

The Count did so, and confirmed what the tutor had said. Indeed he took a long draught, instead of a taste, from the bottle. They renewed their witticisms and merriment over the relic, which, according to them, was decidedly the finest in all the collection. They wished heartily, that they could have a whole cellar of such rarities, etc. etc.

I heard all this in silence, with my head sunk down, and with eyes fixed on the ground. The *badinage* of the strangers was to me, in my present mood of mind, abhorrent and tormenting. In vain did they urge me to taste the wine of St Anthony! I resolutely refused, and at last was allowed to shut up the bottle, well corked, into its proper receptacle.

Thus, then, I had *for once* triumphed and escaped. The strangers, indeed, would have endeavoured to prove, that this trial of the wine was but a venial transgression; but even of *venial* transgressions, I had at that time a proper abhorrence, knowing that they formed the sure and ample foundation for mortal sins.

The strangers left the monastery. But, as I sat alone in my cell, I could not disguise from myself, or deny, that I felt a certain cheerfulness of mind, and exhilaration of spirit. It was obvious that the powerful and spirituous odour of the wine had revived me. No trace or symptom of the bad effects of which Cyrillus had spoken did I experience. On the contrary, an influence the most opposite became decidedly manifest.

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The more that I now meditated on the legend of St. Anthony, and the more livelily that I called to mind the words of the tutor, the more certain did it

appear to me, that the explanations of the latter were correct and well-founded. Then, first, with the rapidity and vehemence of lightning, the thought rushed through me, that on that unhappy day, when the horrible vision broke the thread of my discourse, I too had been on the point of interpreting the legend of St Anthony in the same manner as an ingenious allegory. With this thought another soon was united, which filled my mind so completely, that every other consideration almost faded away.

"How," said I to myself, "if this extraordinary and odoriferous drink actually possessed the secret efficacy of restoring thy strength, and rekindling that intellectual fire which has been so frightfully extinguished? What, if already some mysterious relationship of thy spirit, with the mystical powers contained in that bottle, has been plainly indicated, and even proved, if it were no more than by this,—that the very same odour which stunned and distracted the weakly Cyrillus, has, on thee, only produced the most beneficial effects?"

*

When already I had at various times even resolved to follow the counsel of the strangers, and was in the act of walking through the church towards the reliquary room, I perceived an inward, and, to myself, inexplicable resistance, which held me back. Nay, once, when on the very point of unlocking the cabinet, it seemed to me as if I beheld in the powerful *alto relievo* of the antique carvings on the pannel, the horrible countenance of the painter, with his fixed glaring eyes, of which the intolerable expression still penetrated through my heart, and vehemently seized by a supernatural horror, I fled from the room, in order to prostrate myself at one of the altars in the church, and repent of my temerity!

But, notwithstanding all my endeavours, the same thought continued to persecute me, that only by participation in that miraculous wine could my now sunk spirit be refreshed and restored. The behaviour of the Prior and the monks, who treated me with the most mortifying, however well intended, kindness, as a person disordered in intellect, brought me to absolute despair; and as Leonardus granted me a dispensation from the usual devotional exercises, in order that I might completely recover my strength, I had more time for reflection. In the course of one long sleepless night, persecuted and tortured by my inward sense of degradation, I resolved that I would venture all things, even to death, and the eternal destruction of my soul, in order to regain the station that I had lost. I was, in short, determined to obtain my former powers of mind, or to perish in the attempt.

Chapter VIII

*

I rose from bed, and glided like a ghost through the great aisle of the church towards the reliquary chamber. I had my lamp with me, which I lighted at the altar of the Virgin. Illuminated by the glimmering radiance, the sacred portraits of the Saints seemed to move and start into life. Methought they looked down upon me with an aspect of compassion. In the hollow murmurs of the night wind, which poured in through the high and partly broken windows of the choir, I heard melancholy warning voices. Among others, I distinguished that of my mother. Though from a far distance, these words were clearly audible:—"Medardus! Son Medardus! What wouldst thou do?—Renounce, oh! renounce, ere it is too late, this fearful undertaking!"

I disregarded them all, however: for my courage was wound up by despair. As I came into the ghastly old chamber of relics, all was silent and tranquil. I walked with rapid and resolved steps across the floor, so that my lamp was almost extinguished. I unlocked the cabinet—I seized the box—opened it—beheld the bottle—drew the cork—and in an instant had swallowed a deep and powerful draught!

It seemed immediately as if fire streamed through my veins, and filled me with a sensation of indescribable delight! I drank once more, (but sparingly,) and the raptures of a new and glorious life began at once to dawn on my perception. In haste, as if from dread of being overlooked, I locked up the empty box into the cabinet, and rapidly fled with the inestimable treasure into my cell, where I placed it carefully in my secretaire.

At that moment, while turning over my papers, the identical small key fell into my hands, which formerly, in order to escape from temptation, I had separated from the rest; and yet, notwithstanding my precaution, I had found, both on this occasion, and at the time when the strangers were with me, the means of unlocking the cabinet! I examined my bunch of keys, and found among them one strangely shaped and unknown, with which I had now, and without, in my distraction, remarking it, made my way to the relic.

Hereupon I shuddered involuntarily; but my terror soon wore away. As if on the transparent medium of a *phantasmagorie*, one bright and smiling image chased another before the mind's eye—before that mind, which now, for the first time, seemed to be awoke from deep sleep; yet the visions of my youth awoke not—I thought not of the past; but, under the feverish excitement of newly acquired energy, dwelt only (if thought could be said to dwell where all was restless confusion) on the brilliant prospects which awaited me for *the future*. It was ambition that possessed me. I should have once more the power of obtaining that noblest of earthly supremacies, an empire over the minds of others!

I had no sleep nor rest through the night, but eagerly waited till the brightness of the next morning beamed through the high window into my cell, when I hastened down into the monastery gardens to bask in the warm splendour of the rising sun, which now ascended fieryly, and glowing red from behind the mountains.

Leonardus and the brethren directly remarked the change which had taken place in my outward appearance and behaviour. Instead of being, as formerly, reserved and wrapt up within myself, without uttering a word, I was now become once more lively and cheerful, and spoke again in the same tone with which I used to address the assembled multitudes, and with the fervid eloquence which used to be peculiarly my own.

On being at last left alone with Leonardus, he looked stedfastly at me for a long space, as if he would read my inmost thoughts. Then, while a slight ironical smile coursed over his features, he said only, "Brother Medardus has had some new vision perhaps—has drawn fresh energy and new life from supernatural revelations?"

The irony with which the virtuous, the prudent, and immaculate, treat a fallen brother, is seldom beneficial in its influence; seldom indeed is it really consistent with virtue. It commonly proceeds either from selfish coldness of heart, (this utter antithesis of christian charity,) or from that sort of worldly knowledge, which consists in believing that no one is to be trusted. Hanging down my head, and with eyes fixed on the ground, I stood without uttering a word, and as for Leonardus, he departed and left me to my own contemplations.

I had already been but too much afraid that the state of excitement produced by wine could not possibly continue long, but, on the contrary, might, to my utter grief and discomfiture, draw after it a state of yet more miserable weakness than that which I had already experienced. It was not so, however; with the perfect recovery of my health, I experienced a degree even of long-lost youthful courage. I felt once more that restless and vehement striving after the highest and most extended sphere of action, which the convent could allow to me. Accordingly, I insisted on being allowed to preach again on the next holiday, which after some consideration was granted to me.

Shortly before mounting the pulpit, I allowed myself another draught of the miraculous wine. The effects were even beyond my most sanguine expectations. Never had I spoken more ardently, impressively, or with greater *onction*, than on this day. My audience, as before, were confounded, and the rumour of my complete recovery was with inconceivable rapidity spread abroad.

Henceforward the church was regularly crowded, as on the first weeks of my former celebrity; but the more that I gained the applause of the people, the more serious and reserved did Leonardus appear, so that I began at last with my whole soul to hate him. My object, in acquiring an ascendancy over the multitude, was now fully attained; but in all other respects, my mind was disappointed, disquieted, and gloomy. In the friendship of my brethren I had

lost all confidence. As for Leonardus, I believed that he was wholly actuated by selfish pride, and mean-spirited envy.

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The grand festival of St Bernard drew near, and I burned with impatience to let my light shine in its fullest lustre before the Lady Abbess; on which account, I begged the Prior to form his arrangements in such a manner, that I might be appointed on that day to preach in the Cistertian Convent. Leonardus seemed greatly surprised by my request. He confessed to me, without hesitation, that he himself had intended to preach in the Cistertian Monastery; and had already fixed his plans accordingly. "However," added he, "it will no doubt be on this account the more easy for me to comply with your request; as I can excuse myself, on the plea of illness, and appoint you to attend in my place."

I attempted no apology for the indelicacy of such conduct; for my mind was possessed wholly by one object. The Prior changed his arrangements in the manner he had promised. I went to Kreuzberg, and saw my mother and the Princess on the evening preceding the ceremony. My thoughts, however, were so much taken up with the discourse that I was to deliver, of which the eloquence was to reach the very climax of excellence, that the meeting with them again made but a very trifling impression upon me.

I was at the old farm-house, too, in which my early days had passed away like a dream. I walked again through the neglected garden, where the trees were now in their fullest luxuriance. I stood upon the moss-grown terrace, mounted upon the tottering *altan*,[1] on the top of the old tower, at one end, the better to behold the features of the landscape. Thence I saw the wanderings of the Saale gleaming amid the pine-tree forests; the towers of Kreuzberg and Heidebach on the north, and the Thuringian mountains, with the spires of Königswald, in the distance towards the south. The sunbeams played and shifted over the landscape;—the summer winds breathed fragrance, wafting to my ears the choral anthems from the Monastery, and from the assembled pilgrims. The scenes and their influences were the same, but I saw them with unheeding eyes. I felt them not; the days of innocence were already past, and my heart was agitated with earthly passions.

I felt no reproaching pangs of conscience, however, no sadness, nor regret; I pursued my ONE and *only* object, elated with the certainty of success.

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The report had been duly spread through the town, that I was to preach, instead of the invalid Leonardus; and, therefore, an audience, perhaps greater than on any former occasion, was drawn together. Without having written a single note, and merely arranging mentally into parts the discourse which I was about to deliver, I mounted the pulpit, trusting only to that inspiration which the solemnity of the occasion, the multitude of devout listeners, and the lofty-vaulted church, would of necessity excite in my peculiarly constituted mind.

In this, indeed, I had not been mistaken. Like a fiery lava stream, the torrent of my eloquence flowed irresistibly onward. With many real anecdotes out of the life of St Bernard, I interwove ingenious pictures from my own invention, and the most pious applications of his glorious examples to the conduct of ordinary mortals, till in the looks of all, which were universally directed towards me, I read only astonishment and admiration. Thus my triumph was complete, and methought the trophy would be more brilliant than any that I had before won.

*

How anxiously were wound up my anticipations as to the reception which I was to receive from the Princess! How confidently, indeed, did I look for the highest and most unqualified expression of her delight! Nay, it seemed to me, as if she, in her turn, must now pay the homage of respect and deference to that individual, whom, but a few years before, she had filled with awe and unlimited veneration.

But in these hopes I was miserably disappointed. Having desired an interview, I received from her a message, that being attacked by sudden illness, she could not speak with any one. This notice was so much the more vexatious, since, according to my proud anticipations, illness should have only inclined her the more to receive consolation and spiritual aid from a being so nobly gifted and so highly inspired.

As to my mother, she seemed oppressed, and weighed down by a secret and overpowering grief, as to the cause of which, I did not venture to inquire, because the silent admonitions of my own conscience almost convinced me, that I myself had brought this distress upon her; although the particular means by which it had been produced, I was unable to define. She gave me a small billet from the Princess, of which, till my return to the Capuchin Monastery, I was not to break the seal.

For the rest of the day, (which was, as usual, spent in feasting and mirth,) I could think of nothing else, and scarcely was I arrived at home and in my cell, when with the utmost impatience I broke the seal, and read what follows:

> "My dear son, (for still must I address you in this manner, the slightest variation of expression is like an external farewell to those whom we love,) by your discourse of to-day, you have thrown me into the deepest affliction. No longer has your eloquence been that of a heart whose affections are turned towards Heaven. Your inspiration was not that which bears the pious soul as if on seraph's wings aloft, so that it is enabled, in holy rapture and by anticipation, to behold the kingdoms of the blest. Alas! the pompous adornments of your discourse,—your visible effort, only to utter that which might be striking and brilliant, have sufficiently proved to me, that instead of labouring to instruct the community, and to stir up among them pious affections, you have striven only to acquire the approbation and wonder of the light and worldly-minded multitude. You have hypocritically counterfeited feelings which have no real

existence in your heart. Nay, like a profane actor on the stage, you have practised gestures and a studied mien, all for the sake of the same base meed of wonder and applause. The demon of deceit has taken possession of you, and, if you do not return into yourself, and renounce the sins by which you are beset, will soon bring you to destruction.

"For, sinful, very sinful, are your present actions and conduct; in so much the more, as, by your vows, you are bound to renounce the world and its vanities. May the blessed St Bernard, whom to-day you have so shamefully offended, according to his celestial patience and long sufferance, forgive you, and enlighten your mind, so that you may recover the right path, from which, by stratagems of the devil, you have been thus distracted; and may he intercede for the salvation of your soul!—Farewell!"

As if I had been pierced by an hundred fiery daggers, these words of the Princess struck to my very heart; and, instead of receiving such admonitions gratefully, as a trial of patience and obedience, I burned with rage and resentment. Nothing appeared to me more unequivocal, than that the Prior had taken advantage of the overstrained piety (or methodism) of the Abbess, and sedulously prejudiced her against me. Henceforth I could scarcely bear to look upon him without trembling with indignation. Nay, there often came into my mind thoughts of *revenge*, at which I myself could not help shuddering.

The reproaches of the Abbess and the Prior were to me, on this account, only the more intolerable, that I was obliged, from the very bottom of my soul, to acknowledge their validity and truth. Yet always more and more firmly persisting in my course, and strengthening myself from time to time, with a few drops of the mysterious wine, I went on adorning my sermons with all the arts of rhetoric, and studying theatric gestures and gesticulations. Thus I secured always more and more the meed of applause and admiration.

Chapter IX

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The beams of the morning sun broke in roseate deep lustre through the painted windows of the church. Alone, and lost in deep thought, I sat in the confessional. Only the steps of the officiating lay brother, whose duty it was to sweep the church, sounded through the vaulted roof. I did not expect any visitors at such an hour; but suddenly I heard near me a rustling sound; and, behold! there came a tall, slender, but exquisitely proportioned, figure of a young woman, in a foreign dress, with a long veil over her face, who must have entered at one of the private doors, and was approaching me as if for confession. In her movements was indescribable grace—she drew nearer—she entered the confessional, and kneeled down. Deep sighs, as if involuntarily, were heaved from her bosom. It seemed as if, even before she spoke, some irresistible spell of enchantment pervaded the atmosphere, and overpowered me with emotions, such as, till now, I had never experienced.

How can I describe the tone of her voice, which was wholly new and peculiar; but which penetrated even into my inmost heart! She began her confession. Every word that she uttered rivetted more and more my attention, and ruled, like a supernatural charm, over my feelings. She confessed, in the first place, that she cherished a forbidden love, with which she had long struggled in vain; and this love was so much the more sinful, because holy vows for ever fettered the object of her affection. Yet, in this hopeless delirium of her despair, she had many times cursed the bonds, however sacred, which held them thus asunder.—She here faltered—paused—then, with a torrent of tears, which almost stifled her utterance, added, "Thou thyself, Medardus, art the consecrated being whom I so unspeakably love!"

As if in deadly convulsions, all my nerves irresistibly vibrated. I was out of myself. An impulse, till now never known, almost raged in my bosom. A passionate desire to behold her features—to press her to my heart—to perish at once in delight and despair—wholly took possession of me! A moment of pleasure to be purchased by an eternity of pain! She was now silent; but I heard still the deep heaving of her breath. In a kind of wild despair, I violently summoned up all my strength. In what words I answered her, I cannot now remember, nor durst I look on her as she departed; but I perceived that she silently rose up, and retired; while, with the cloth curtains firmly pressed upon my eyelids, I remained fixed, motionless, and almost unconscious, in the confessional.

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By good chance, no one else came into the church, and I had an opportunity, therefore, to escape quietly into my cell. How completely different all things

now appeared to me! How foolish—how insipid all my former endeavours! I had not seen the countenance of the unknown; and yet, by the force of my own imagination, her image lived within my heart. She looked on me with her mild blue eyes, in which tears were glistening, and from which glances fell into my soul like consuming fire, which no prayer and no penitential exercises any more could extinguish. Such penitence, indeed, I did not spare; but, on the contrary, chastised myself with the knotted cords of our order, till blood streamed from my mangled flesh, that I might, if possible, escape from that eternal destruction by which I was now threatened.

*

There was an altar in our church dedicated to St Rosalia; and her picture, admirably painted, was hung over it, representing the Saint at the moment when she suffered martyrdom. In this picture, which had never particularly struck me before, I now at once recognised the likeness of my beloved! Even her dress exactly resembled the foreign habit of the unknown!

Here, therefore, like a victim of the most horrible insanity, I used to lie, for hours together, prostrate upon the steps of the altar, uttering hideous groans, and even howling in despair, so that the monks were terrified, and fled from me in dismay.

In more tranquil moments, I used to walk hurriedly up and down the convent garden. I beheld her well-known from wandering through the misty fragrant regions of the distant landscape. I saw her emerging from the thickets of the dense wood, rising like a naiad from the fountains—hovering, like some goddess of the olden time, over the flowery meadows. Everywhere I beheld her, and lived but for her alone. Then I cursed my vows, and my now miserable existence. I resolved to go forth into the world, and not to rest until I had discovered her, and purchased happiness, though at the expense of my soul's eternal weal!

At last, however, I succeeded so far, that I could, at least in presence of the Prior and the monks, moderate the ebullitions of my (to them) unaccountable delirium. I could appear more tranquil; yet, by this means, my inward agitations were only the more wasting and destructive. No slumber, no rest by night or by day! Incessantly persecuted and tormented by one and the same phantom, I passed, especially the night, always in intolerable conflicts. I called, severally, on all the Saints; but not to rescue me from the seductive image by which I was beset—not to save my soul from eternal misery—No! but to bestow on me the object of my affections—to annihilate my vows, and to give me freedom, that I might, without *double* guilt, fall into the abyss of sin.

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At last, I had firmly resolved, that I would make an end of my torments, by a sudden flight from the convent. For, by some strange hallucination, nothing more than freedom from my monastic engagements seemed to me necessary to bring the unknown within my arms, and to put an end to the passions by

which I was tormented.

I resolved that, having disguised my appearance sufficiently by cutting off my long beard, and assuming a lay dress, I would linger and wander about in the town till I had found her. I never once took into consideration how difficult, nay, how impossible, this would prove, or that, perhaps, having no money, I would not be able to live for a single day beyond the walls of the monastery.

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The last day that I intended to spend among the capuchins had now arrived. By a lucky chance, I had been able to obtain a genteel dress, like that of an ordinary citizen. On the following night, I was resolved to leave the convent, never more to return.

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Evening had already closed in, when, suddenly, I received from the Prior a summons to attend him. I trembled involuntarily at the message; for nothing appeared to me more certain, than that he had discovered more or less of my secret plans.

Leonardus received me with unusual gravity—nay, with an imposing dignity of demeanour, by which I was quite overawed.

"Brother Medardus," he began, "your unreasonable behaviour, which I look upon only as the too powerful ebullition of mental excitement, (but which excitement you have for a long time, perhaps not with the purest intentions, sought to foster,)—this behaviour, I say, has utterly disturbed our community, and torn asunder those peaceful bands by which the society was here united. Such conduct operates in the most destructive manner against that cheerfulness and good humour which, till now, I had successfully striven to establish among the monks, as the surest proof and demonstration of a consistent and pious life.

"Perhaps, however, some peculiar and unfortunate event during your sojourn among us bears the blame of all this. You should, however, have sought consolation from me, as from a friend and father, to whom you might confide all things; but you have been silent, and I am the less inclined now to trouble you with questions, as the possession of such a secret might, in a great measure, deprive me of that mental freedom and tranquillity, which, at my years, I prize above all earthly treasures.

"You have many times, and especially at the altar of St Rosalia, by horrible and extraordinary expressions, which seemed to escape from you in the unconsciousness of delirium, given great scandal, not only to the brethren, but to strangers who happened to be visiting among us. Therefore, according to the laws of the monastery, I could punish you severely; but I shall not do so, since, perhaps, some evil influence, some demon, or, in short, the Arch-fiend himself, against whom you have not sufficiently striven, is the direct cause of your errors; and I shall only give you up to the guidance of your own

conscience, with the injunction to be ardent and faithful in penitence and prayer.—Medardus, I can read deep into thy soul!—Thou wishest for freedom, and to be abroad in the world."

Leonardus fixed on me his most penetrating glances, which I was quite unable to encounter; but, on the contrary, felt myself wholly overpowered, and, conscious of my own wicked designs, remained silent.

"I understand you," said Leonardus, "and believe, indeed, that this world, if you walk through it piously, may contribute more to your welfare than the lonely life in our convent. An occurrence, involving the best interests of our order, renders it necessary to send one of the brethren to Rome—I have chosen you for this purpose; and, even to-morrow, you may be provided with the necessary powers and instructions, and set forward on your journey. You are so much the better qualified for this expedition, being still young and active, clever in business, and a perfect master of the Italian language.

"Betake yourself now to your cell—pray with fervour for the welfare of your soul. I shall meanwhile offer up my prayers for you; but leave out all corporeal chastisement, which would only weaken you, and render you unfit for the journey. At day-break, I shall await you in my chamber."

Like a gleam from Heaven, these words of Leonardus fell upon the darkness of my soul. Instead of the hatred which I had been cherishing, the attachment which I had before felt towards him regained its full sway. I even burst into tears; for it appeared to me as if he indeed read my most secret thoughts, and bestowed on me the free liberty of giving myself up to that imperious destiny, which, perhaps, after granting a few moments of delusive pleasure, might precipitate me into an abyss of irremediable destruction.

Flight and secrecy were now become wholly needless. I could openly leave the convent, and freely give myself up to my own plans of following that being, without whom there could be for me no happiness upon earth, and whom I was resolved, at all rides, to discover.

The journey to Rome, and the commissions with which I was to be charged, appeared to me only inventions of Leonardus, in order that I might, in a becoming manner, quit the monastery.

I passed the night, according to his injunctions, in prayer and in preparation for the journey. The rest of the miraculous wine I put into a basket-bottle, in order to guard it as a precious cordial, and afterwards, going to the relic room, deposited the empty flask in the cabinet.

It was not without astonishment that when, on the following day, I waited on the Prior, I perceived, from his diffuse and serious instructions, that there was a real cause for my being sent to Rome, and that the dispatches to which he had alluded were of considerable weight and importance. The reflection, therefore, fell heavily on my conscience, that, after receiving these credentials, I should yet be determined, from the moment that I left the convent, to give myself wholly up to my own impulses, without the slightest regard to any duty whatever. The thoughts, however, of *her*—the mistress of

my soul—failed not to encourage me again, and I resolved to remain faithful to my own plans. The brethren soon after assembled together; and my leave-taking of them, and especially of the Prior Leonardus, filled me with the deepest melancholy. At last, the convent gates closed behind me, and I was equipped for my journey into a far distant land.

Chapter X

*

I had walked for nearly an hour, and had now come to a rising ground. I looked back to have a last prospect of the convent and the town, whose well-known outlines were already become obscured by distance, and by the white masses of vapour that yet lingered in the valley. But on the eminence to which I had arrived, the fresh morning breezes awoke, and played coolly on my brows. Methought I heard music in the air. It was the pious hymns of the monks that were yet borne up towards me, as if to express once more their parting blessing and long farewell. Involuntarily I joined in the anthem, and lingered on the spot, unwilling to break a train of intricate associations, which it would require volumes to analyse and develope.

But now the sun rose in full glory over the towers of Königswald. The glossy foliage of the trees, already tinged by the first hues of autumn, shone in his dazzling golden light. There was pleasure even in the rustling sound of the dew-drops that fell like showers of diamonds, amid the myriads of insects that danced hummingly through the stilly air of the sheltering thickets. The birds, too, were awake, and fluttered, singing and rejoicing in amorous play, through the woods. To crown all, it was a holiday, and there came a religious procession of peasant lads and girls, in their best attire, up the hill side.

Never had I before enjoyed such a mood of mind. I seemed to myself wholly metamorphosed; and as if inspired by some newly awoke energies, I strode rapidly down the opposite side of the hill.

To the first *bauer* whom I happened to meet, I put the question, whether he knew the place where, according to the route that had been given to me, I was first to pass the night; and he described to me very accurately a footpath leading off from the high road, and winding through the mountains, by which I should reach more rapidly than by any other course, the place of my destination.

I had parted with the *Bauer*, and had walked on for a considerable space in complete solitude, when, for the first time since my setting out, the thoughts occurred to me of the unknown beauty, and my fantastical plan of going in search of her. But, as if by some new and supernatural influence, her image had now vanished almost quite away; so that it was with difficulty I could trace the pale disfigured lineaments. The more that I laboured to retain this apparition firmly in my remembrance, the more fallaciously it melted, as if into vapour, from my sight; only my extravagant behaviour in the convent, after that mysterious adventure, remained fresh in my recollection. It was now even to myself inconceivable with what patience the Prior had borne with all this; and how, instead of inflicting the punishment I so justly deserved, he had sent me forth into the world.

I soon became convinced, that the visit of the unknown beauty had been nothing more nor less than a vision, the consequence of too stedfast application. Instead of imputing this, as I would formerly have done, to any direct interference of the devil, I ascribed it to the natural deception of my own disordered senses. Nay, the circumstance of the stranger being dressed exactly like St Rosalia, seemed to prove, that the animated and excellent picture of that saint, which, in an oblique direction, I could behold from the confessional, had a great share in producing my delusion.

Deeply did I admire the wisdom of the Prior, who had chosen the only proper means for my recovery; for, shut up within the convent walls, always brooding over my own gloomy thoughts, and surrounded ever by the same objects, I must irretrievably have fallen into utter madness. Becoming always more reconciled to the rational conclusion, that I had but dreamed, I could scarcely help laughing at myself; nay, with a levity which before had been most remote from my character, I made a jest of my own supposition, that a female saint had fallen in love with me; whereupon I recollected also, with equal merriment, that I had once imagined myself to be transformed into St Anthony.

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One morning, (it was after I had been already several days wandering amid the mountains,) I found myself amid bold, frightfully piled up masses of rock, and was obliged to proceed by narrow, dangerous footpaths, beneath which the mountain rivulets roared and foamed in their contracted ravines. The path became always more lonely, wild, and arduous. The autumnal sun (it was in September) rose high in heaven, and burned upon my uncovered head. I panted for thirst, for no spring was near, and I could not reach the torrents, though their voice was audible; moreover, there was yet no sign of my approach to the village, which had been marked for my next resting place.

At last, quite exhausted, I sat down upon a mass of rocks, and could not resist taking a draught from my basket-bottle, notwithstanding that I wished to reserve as much as possible of the extraordinary liquor. I felt instantly the mantling glow of quickened circulation in every vein, and energetic bracing of every fibre, while, refreshed and strengthened, I boldly marched forward, in order to gain the appointed station, which now could not be far distant.

The dark pine-tree woods became always more and more dense, and the ground more steep and uneven. Suddenly I heard near me a rustling in the thickets, and then a horse neighed aloud, which was there bound to a tree. I advanced some steps farther, as the path guided me onwards, till, almost petrified with terror, I suddenly found myself on the verge of a tremendous precipice, beyond which the river, which I have already mentioned, was thundering and foaming at an immeasurable distance below.

With astonishment, too, I beheld, on a projecting point of rock which jutted over the chasm, what appeared to me the figure of a man. At first, I suspected some new delusion; but, recovering in some degree from my fear, I ventured nearer, and perceived a young man in uniform, on the very outermost point of

the rocky cliff. His sabre, his hat, with a high plume of feathers, and a portefeuille, lay beside him;—with half his body hanging over the abyss, he seemed to be asleep, and always to sink down lower and lower! His fall was inevitable!

I ventured nearer. Seizing him with one hand, and endeavouring to pull him back, I shouted aloud, "For God's sake, sir, awake! For Heaven's sake, beware!"—I said no more; for, at that moment, starting from his sleep, and at the same moment losing his equilibrium, he fell down into the cataract!

His mangled form must have dashed from point to point of the rocks in his descent. I heard one piercing yell of agony, which echoed through the immeasurable abyss, from which at last only a hollow moaning arose, which soon also died away.

Struck with unutterable horror, I stood silent and motionless. At last, by a momentary impulse, I seized the hat, the sword, the portefeuille, and wished to withdraw myself as quickly as possible from the fatal spot.

Now, however, I observed a young man dressed as a *chasseur* emerge from the wood, and coming forward to meet me. At first, he looked at me earnestly and scrutinizingly—then, all at once, broke out into immoderate laughter; whereat an ice-cold shuddering vibrated through all my frame.

"*Sapperment!* my Lord Count," said the youth, "your masquerade is indeed admirable and complete; and if the Lady Baroness were not apprized before hand, I question if even she would recognize you in this disguise.—But what have you done with the uniform, my lord?"

"As for that," replied I, "I threw it down the rocks into the water."—Yet these words were *not mine*! I only gave utterance, involuntarily and almost unconsciously, to expressions, which, by means of some supernatural influence, rose up within me.

I stood afterwards silent, and absorbed in thought, with my staring eyes always turned to the rocks, as if from thence the mangled frame of the unfortunate Count would ascend to bear witness against me. My conscience accused me as his murderer; but, though thus unnerved, I continued to hold the hat, the sword, and the portefeuille, convulsively firm in my grasp.

"Now, my lord," resumed the chasseur, "I shall ride on by the carriage road to the village, where I shall keep myself *incognito* in the small house to the left-hand side of the gate. Of course, you will now walk down to the castle, where you are probably expected by this time. Your hat and sword I shall take with me."

I gave them to him accordingly.—"Now, farewell, my lord," added the youth; "much pleasure attend you in the castle!"

Hereupon, whistling and singing, he vanished away into the woods. I heard him afterwards untie the horse, that was there bound to a tree, and ride off.

When I had recovered myself in some measure from my confusion, and reflected on the adventure, I was obliged to confess, that I had become wholly the victim of chance or destiny, which had at once thrown me into the most extraordinary circumstances. It was quite obvious, that an exact resemblance of my face and figure with those of the unfortunate Count, had deceived the chasseur; and that his master must have chosen the dress of a capuchin, in order to carry on some adventure in the castle, of which the completion had now devolved upon me! Death had overtaken him, and at the same moment a wonderful fatality had *forced* me into his place. An inward irresistible impulse to act the part of the deceased Count, overpowered every doubt, and stunned the warning voice of conscience, which accused me of murder *now*, and of shameless intended crimes *yet to come*!

I now opened the portefeuille. Letters, money, and bank-bills, to a considerable amount, fell into my hands. I wished to go through the papers, one by one, in order that I might be aware of the late Count's situation. But my internal disquietude, the confusion of a thousand strange ideas, which crowded through my brain, did not admit of this.

After walking a few paces, I again stood still. I seated myself on a rock, and endeavoured to force myself into a quieter mood of mind. I saw the danger of stepping, thus wholly unprepared, into a circle of people, of whom I knew nothing. Then suddenly I heard a sound of hunting horns through the wood, and voices shouting and rejoicing, which came always nearer and nearer. My heart beat with violence—my breath faltered.—Now, indeed, a new life, a new world, were about to be opened upon me!

I turned into a small, narrow footpath, which led me down a steep declivity. On stepping out of the thicket, I beheld an extensive, nobly built castle, lying beneath me in the valley. *There*, of course, was the intended scene of the adventure which the late Count had in contemplation, and I walked courageously onwards. I soon found myself in the finely kept walks of the park, by which the castle was surrounded. At last, in a dark side allée, in a kind of *berçeau*, I saw two male figures, of whom one was in the dress of a lay monk. They came nearer, but were engaged in deep discourse, and never once observed me.

Chapter XI

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The lay monk was a young man, on whose features lay the death-like paleness of a deeply corroding and inward grief. Of the other I could only say, that he was plainly, but genteelly dressed, and was considerably advanced in years. They seated themselves on a stone bench, with their backs turned towards me. I could understand every word that they said.

"Hermogen," said the old man, "by this obstinate silence, you bring your nearest friends to utter despair. Your dark melancholy increases; your youthful strength is withered. This extravagant resolution of becoming a monk, ruins all your father's hopes and wishes. Yet he would willingly give up the hopes that he had formed, if, from youth onwards, you had shewn any real tendency of character to loneliness and monachism. In such case, he certainly would not struggle against the fate that hung over him and you.

"But the sudden and violent change in your whole disposition, has proved only too plainly, that some concealed and unfortunate event—some mysterious adventure, at which we cannot guess, is the cause of your melancholy; which cause, however remote, still continues to exercise over you the same destructive influence.

"Your mind in former days was invariably cheerful, buoyant, and disengaged. What, then, can all at once have rendered you so misanthropical, that you should now suppose there cannot be in the breast of any living mortal, counsel or consolation for your afflictions?—You are silent—you stare only with your eyes fixed on vacancy.

"Hermogen, you once not only respected, but loved your father. If it has now become impossible for you to open your heart, and to have confidence in him, yet, at least, do not torment him by the daily sight of this dress, which announces only your perseverance in the most inimical and fantastic resolutions. I conjure you, Hermogen, to lay aside this hateful garb. Believe me, there lies in such outward things, more consequence than is usually ascribed to them. Surely you will not misunderstand, or suspect me of levity, when I remind you of the effect produced by dress on an actor. On assuming the costume of any character, he experiences in himself a corresponding change of feelings. Are you not yourself of opinion, that if these detestable long garments did not come in your way to confine you, you would be able to walk and run—nay, to skip, jump, and dance, just as readily and lightly as before? The gleam and glitter of the bright dazzling epaulet, which formerly shone upon your shoulders, might again reflect upon your pale cheeks their wonted colour; and the clang of your military accoutrements would sound like cheering music in the ears of your noble horse, who would come neighing and prancing with joy to meet you, bending his neck proudly before

his beloved master.

"Rouse yourself, then, Baron!—Away with these black robes, which, to tell the truth, are by no means becoming.—Say, shall Frederick now run and search out your uniform?"

The old man rose up as if to go. The youth detained him, and, evidently quite overpowered by emotion, fell into his arms.—"Alas! Reinhold," said he, "you torment me indeed inexpressibly. The more that you endeavour in this manner to awaken within me those chords which formerly sounded harmoniously, the more forcibly I feel how my relentless fate, as with an iron hand, has seized upon me, and crushed my whole frame, mental and bodily; so that, like a broken lute, I must either be silent, or respond in discord."

"These, Baron," said Reinhold, "are but your own delusions. You speak of some horrible and monstrous destiny which tyrannizes over you; but as to *wherein* or *how* this destiny exists, you are invariably silent. Yet, be that as it may, a young man like you, endowed both with mental energy, and courage which is the natural result of animal spirits, should be able to arm himself against those demons—those invisible foes, with their iron fangs, of whom you so often speak. As if aided by divine inspiration, he should exalt himself above that destiny, which would otherwise crush him into the earth; and, cherishing within his own heart the principles of life, wing his way above the petty torments of this world. Indeed, I can scarcely imagine to myself any circumstances that will not finally yield to a patient, reasonable, and yet energetic inward volition."

Hereupon Hermogen drew himself one step backwards, and fixing on the old man, a dark, gloomy look, almost with an expression of repressed rage, which was truly frightful:—

"Know, then," said he, "that *I myself* am the destiny—the demon, as thou sayest, by whom I am persecuted and destroyed, that my conscience is loaded with guilt, nay, with the stain of a shameful, infamous, and mortal crime, which I thus endeavour to expiate in misery and in despair!—Therefore, I beseech you, be compassionate, and implore, too, my father's consent, that he may allow me to go into a monastery!"

"Hermogen," said the old man, "you are now in a situation peculiar to those who are disordered both in body and in mind—you, therefore, cannot judge for yourself; and, in short, you should, on no account, go from hence. Besides, in a few days the Baroness will return home with Aurelia, and you must of necessity stay to see them."

A smile of bitter mockery coursed over the young man's features. He even laughed aloud, and cried, in a voice at which my heart recoiled and shuddered, "*Must* stay?—Must *therefore* stay?—Ay, truly, old man, thou art in the right—I must indeed stay; and my penitence will be here far more frightful than in the dreariest cloister."

With these words, he broke away, and disappeared in the thicket, leaving the old man motionless, and apparently lost in the most gloomy reflections.

"*Gelobt sey Jesu Christus!*" said I, pronouncing the conventual salutation in my best manner, and advancing towards him. He started, looked at me with surprise, and then seemed to call something to mind that he already knew, but could not *clearly* remember.

At last, "Reverend sir," said he, "it was perhaps to your coming that the Baroness alluded in a letter received by us four days ago; and you are sent hither for the benefit and consolation of this afflicted family."

I answered without hesitation in the affirmative, and the stranger (or Reinhold, as he has been styled) then immediately recovered that cheerfulness which seemed natural to his disposition. We walked on together through a very beautiful park, and came at last to a *boskett* near the castle, from whence there was a magnificent prospect towards the mountains.

On his giving orders to a servant, who just then appeared near us, a plentiful *dejeuner a-la-fourchette* was immediately served up, with a bottle of excellent French wine.

On joining glasses, and looking at each other, it appeared to me as if Reinhold watched me with great attention, and seemed labouring with some obscure reminiscence.

At last he broke out—"Good Heaven! reverend sir, I must be grossly deceiving myself if you are not Brother Medardus, from the capuchin convent in Königswald: And yet, how is this possible? But, certainly, there can be no doubt!—Speak only, I beg of you, and clear up this mystery."

As if struck to the earth by lightning, I was, by these words of Reinhold, quite paralyzed and overpowered. I saw myself at once discovered, unmasked—accused, perhaps, as a murderer! Despair gave me strength. Life and death depended on that moment.

"I am indeed Brother Medardus, from the capuchin convent in Königswald," said I; "and am now employed on a diplomatic mission as legate from our monastery to Rome."

These words I uttered with all the quiet and composure which I was able to counterfeit. "Perhaps, then," said Reinhold, "it is only chance that brought you hither. You may have wandered from the high road. Or, if otherwise, how could it happen that the Baroness became acquainted with you, and sent you hither?"

Without a moment's reflection, but once more only *repeating* words which seemed by some strange voice to be whispered into my ears, I replied, "On my journey I became acquainted with the Baroness's confessor, and, at his request, I agreed to come hither."

"True," said Reinhold; "now I remember that the Baroness indeed wrote somewhat to this effect: Well, Heaven be praised that it is so, and that you have been induced to come to our assistance. I was, by chance, some years

ago, in Königswald, and heard one of your admirable discourses, in which you seemed to be indeed gifted with divine inspiration. To your piety, your unaffected eloquence, your true calling to be the champion of souls otherwise lost, I can safely trust for the fulfilment of that, which, to all of us, would have been impossible.

"I consider myself particularly fortunate, however, in having met you before you were introduced to the Baron, and will take advantage of this opportunity to make you acquainted with the circumstances of the family, and to be perfectly sincere and undisguised, as is fitting before a man of your sanctity and dignified character. It is indeed requisite, that, in order to give the proper tendency and guidance to your endeavours, you should receive from me hints on many points, on which (for other reasons) I would rather have been silent. I shall endeavour, however, to go through the whole in as few words as possible.

"With the Baron I was brought up from infancy. A certain similarity of temper made us like brothers, and annihilated those barriers which difference of birth would otherwise have raised up betwixt us. I was never absent from him; and, accordingly, after his father's death, and when he had finished his academical studies, he directly appointed me steward over his paternal property in these mountains.

"I continued still to be his most intimate friend and companion; nor were the most secret occurrences and circumstances of the house concealed from me. The late Baron had wished for his son's connection by marriage with an Italian family, whom he had highly respected; and my patron so much the more readily fulfilled his father's wishes, as he found himself irresistibly attracted to the young lady, who was by nature beautiful, and by education highly accomplished.

"Seldom, in truth, are the wishes and plans of parents either so judiciously framed, or so prosperously fulfilled, as in this instance. The young couple seemed to have been born for each other,—and of this happy marriage, a son and daughter, Hermogen and Aurelia, were the offspring.

"For the most part, we spent our winters in the town; but when, soon after the birth of Aurelia, the Baroness began to decline in health, we remained there for the summer also, as she indispensably required the assistance of physicians. She died just as, on the approach of another spring, her visible amendment had filled the Baron with the most delightful hopes.

"We then fled to the country, and there only time could meliorate the deep-consuming grief by which he had become wholly possessed. Hermogen, meanwhile, grew up to be a fine youth, and Aurelia became every day more and more the image of her mother. The careful education of these children was our daily task and delight. Hermogen shewed a decided turn for the military life, and this constrained the Baron to send him into town, in order that he might begin his career there under the care of our old friend the governor of the fort.

"For the first time, three years ago, we again spent a winter together, as in old times, at the *residenz*; partly in order that the Baron might be near his son, and partly that he might visit his old acquaintances, who had constantly beset him with letters complaining of his absence.

"Universal attention was at that time excited by the appearance of a niece of the governor's, who had come hither out of the neighbouring *residenz* of R—. She was an orphan, and had betaken herself to her uncle's house for protection; though *there* she had a whole wing of the castle to herself, had also her own private *economie*, and was in the habit of assembling the *beau monde* around her.

"Without describing Mademoiselle Euphemia too minutely, (which is the more needless, as you, reverend sir, will soon see her, and judge for yourself,) suffice it to say, that in all that she said or did, there was an indescribable grace, refinement, and self-possession, by which the natural charms of her beauty were heightened to an almost irresistible degree.

"Wherever she appeared, all that were around her seemed to be animated with new spirit; and every one, with the most glowing enthusiasm, paid her homage. Indeed the more insignificant and lifeless characters appeared in her company to be carried quite out of themselves, and to be so completely warmed with fire not their own, that, as if inspired, they revelled in enjoyments, of which till then they had never been capable.

"Of course, there was no want of lovers, who daily paid their court to this new divinity. They were numerous and indefatigable in their attentions. But meanwhile, one could never with certainty say, that she distinguished either this or that individual from his competitors; but, on the contrary, with a kind of playful, yet wicked irony, which provoked without giving absolute offence, she contrived to involve them all in a perplexing, but indissoluble, kind of thraldom. They moved about her, completely under subjection, as if within the limits of some enchanted circle.

"On the Baron, this new Circe had gradually and imperceptibly made a wonderful impression. Immediately on his first appearance, she shewed to him a degree of attention, which appeared to be the result of youthful, almost childish, veneration. In conversation afterwards, she displayed her usual skill, proving herself (in his estimation at least) to be possessed of the most cultivated understanding and the deepest sensibility, such as, till now, he had scarcely ever found among women.

"With indescribable delicacy, she sought for and obtained Aurelia's friendship, and took such a warm interest in her fate, that by degrees she began to perform for her all the duties of her untimely lost mother. In brilliant circles especially, she knew how to assist the modest, inexperienced girl; and, without being observed, to set off Aurelia's natural good sense and talents to such advantage, that the latter became every day more distinguished, admired, and sought after.

"The Baron took every opportunity of becoming quite eloquent in praise of Euphemia; and here, for the first time, probably, in our lives, it happened that he and I were completely at variance.

"In society I was generally a spectator merely, rather than an actor, in whatever was going forward. In this way, looking on Euphemia as an object worthy of investigation, I had considered her with great attention. On her part, she had only, in compliance with her system of not neglecting any one, now and then interchanged with me a few insignificant words.

"I must confess, that she was, above all other women, beautiful and attractive;—that whatever she said was marked by sense and sensibility, (in other words, by *tact* and by prudence;) yet, notwithstanding all this, I was conscious to myself of an inexplicable feeling of distrust and aversion. Nay, whenever she addressed her discourse to me, or her looks by chance fell upon me, I could not escape from a certain disquietude and apprehension that were quite overpowering. Her eyes, especially when she believed herself unobserved, glowed with an extraordinary and quite peculiar light, as if some unquenchable fire dwelt within her, which, at all times with difficulty kept down, had then irresistibly broken forth.

"Besides all this, there was too often on her otherwise finely formed lips, the expression of a hateful irony—the decided indication even of a malignant and fiendish scorn, at which my very heart shuddered.

"In this manner, especially, she often looked at Hermogen, who, for his part, troubled himself very little about her;—but such looks alone were quite sufficient to convince me, that, under a specious and beautiful mask, much was concealed, of which no one but myself suspected the existence.

Chapter XII

*

"Against the unmeasured praise of the Baron," continued the old man, "I had indeed nothing to offer, but my own physiognomical observations, to which he did not allow the slightest importance; but, on the contrary, perceived in my dislike of Euphemia only a highly absurd species of idiosyncrasy. He even confessed to me, that the young lady would soon become one of his family, as he would do all in his power to bring about a marriage betwixt her and Hermogen.

"The latter happened to come into the room just as we spoke with considerable warmth on this subject, and when I was endeavouring to defend my notions about Euphemia. The Baron, accustomed always to act openly, and on the spur of the moment, made his son instantly acquainted with all his plans and wishes.

"Hermogen very quietly listened to his father's enthusiastic praises of the young lady; and when the eulogy was ended, answered that he did not feel himself in the least attracted towards Euphemia; that he could never love her; and therefore earnestly begged that any schemes for a marriage between her and himself might be given over.

"The Baron was not a little confounded, when all his favourite projects were thus at once set aside, but at the same time, said the less to Hermogen, as he recollected that Euphemia herself had never been consulted on the subject. With a cheerfulness and good humour which are indeed quite his own, he soon began to jest over the complete failure of his endeavours, and said that Hermogen evidently shared in my idiosyncrasy; though, for his part, how a beautiful young woman could inspire such dislike, he was quite unable to perceive.

"His own intercourse with Euphemia of course remained the same as before. He had been so accustomed to her society, that he was unable to spend any day without seeing her.

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"Consequently, it soon after happened, that one day, in a careless and cheerful humour, he remarked to her, that there was but *one* individual within her enchanted circle, who had not become enamoured, and that was Hermogen. The latter, he added, had flatly refused to listen to a plan of marriage, which his father had wished to set on foot for him.

"Euphemia, in the same style of badinage, replied, that it might have been as well to consult her also on the subject, and that although she would gladly be

more nearly allied to the Baron, yet this must by no means take place through Hermogen, who was for her far too serious, and too particular in his humour.

"From the time that this discourse took place with the Baron, (who immediately communicated it to me,) Euphemia continued, even in an unusual degree, her attentions towards him and Aurelia. At last, by many slight but intelligible hints, she gradually brought the Baron to the idea that a union with herself would exactly realize the *beau ideal* which she had formed of happiness in marriage. Every objection which could be urged on the score of years, or otherwise, she was able in the most convincing manner to refute, and with-all, advanced in her operations so gradually, delicately, and imperceptibly, that the Baron believed all the ideas which she directly put into his head to be the growth of his own feelings and his own ingenuity.

"Still sound and unbroken in health, and by nature lively and energetic, he now felt himself inspired, even like a young man, by a glowing and fervent passion. I could no longer damp nor restrain this wild flight, for it was already too late. In short, not long afterwards, to the astonishment of all the *residenz*, Euphemia became the wife of the Baron!!

"It seemed to me now, as if this formidable being, whom even I had before regarded with such distrust, having thus stepped at last into our very domestic circle, I must now be doubly and trebly on the watch for my friend and for myself. Hermogen attended the marriage of his father with the coldest indifference, but Aurelia, the dear child, who was haunted with a thousand indefinable apprehensions, burst into tears.

"Soon after the marriage, Euphemia longed to visit the Baron's castle here among the mountains. Her wish was gratified accordingly, and I must confess, that her whole behaviour was, for a long time, so consistent and correct, that she extorted from me involuntary admiration. Thus, two years flowed on in perfect quietness and domestic enjoyment. Both winters we spent in the *residenz*, but even there too, the Baroness shewed towards her husband so much unfeigned respect, and such attention even to his slightest wishes, that even the voice of envy and detraction were at last put to silence, and not one of the young libertines who thought that they would here have sufficient scope for their gallantry, allowed themselves even the least freedom in her presence. During the last winter, I was probably the only one left, who, still influenced by the old *idiosyncrasy*, ventured to cherish doubts and mistrust against her.

"Before the Baron's marriage, a certain Count Victorin, major in the Prince's *Garde d'Honneur*, and only now and then professionally established at the *residenz*, was one of Euphemia's regular suitors, and the only one of whom it could ever have been said, that he at times appeared to be honoured by her particular regard. It had once been whispered indeed, that a much nearer and more intimate acquaintance existed between them, than was yet indicated by their outward behaviour. But the rumour immediately died away, as obscurely as it had arisen.

"Be that as it may, the Count Victorin was again this last winter in the *residenz*, and of course, made his appearance in the circles of the Baroness.

He seemed, however, not in the least to concern himself about her, but rather even to avoid her conversation. Notwithstanding all this, I imagined that frequently their looks met, when they believed themselves unobserved; and that in these looks—but I shall not describe more particularly—suffice it to say, that their expression was such, as in my opinion could not be misunderstood, and such as to cause to me the utmost disquietude.

"More especially, it happened one night at the house of the Governor, where a large party was assembled, that I stood crowded and squeezed up into a window, where I was more than half concealed by the furniture drapery, and only two or three steps before me was the Count Victorin.

"Then Euphemia, more than ever brilliant and tasteful in her dress, and beaming in luxuriant beauty, swept up to him as if to pass by. No one, probably, remarked them but myself. He seized her arm, with a kind of passionate vehemence, but so that it was observed by me alone. Their eyes met; her expressive looks were turned directly and full upon him. She whispered some words, of which I could not seize the import. Euphemia must have seen me. She turned round quickly; but I distinctly heard the words, 'We are observed!'

"I stood as if petrified by the shock of this discovery. Alas! reverend sir, think of my conflicting feelings at that moment—think of my gratitude and respect —of that faithful attachment with which I was devoted to the Baron—and recollect, too, the apprehensions by which I had been so long persecuted, and which were thus so cruelly and unequivocally realized!

"These few words, however unimportant in themselves, had completely revealed to me that there was a secret understanding between the Baroness and the Count! For the present I was obliged to be silent; but I was resolved to watch Euphemia with Argus eyes, and then, as soon as I had obtained *proofs* of her crime, to break asunder at once the disgraceful bands in which she had fettered my unhappy friend.

"Yet who is able to counteract successfully the contrivances of devilish cunning and hypocrisy? *My* endeavours, at least, were all utterly in vain, and it would only have been absurd to impart to the Baron what I had seen and heard. My opponents would directly have found ways and means to represent me as a half-witted, tiresome visionary.

"The snow still lay upon the mountains, when we came, last spring, over to the castle; but I made my usual excursions over all the grounds. One morning I met, in a neighbouring village, *a bauer*, who had something odd in his walk and gestures. Happening to turn round his head, he betrayed to me, on the first glance, the features of the Count Victorin! However, in the same moment he had vanished among the houses, and was no more to be seen.

"Any mistake on my part was here impossible. And what could have led him to this disguise, but the continuance of his old intrigue with the Baroness? Even now, I know for certain that he is again in this neighbourhood, for I have seen his *chasseur* riding past; and yet it is inexplicable to me how it happened that he did not rather attend the Baroness in town.

"It is now three months since we received intelligence that her uncle the Governor was attacked by severe and dangerous illness. Without delay, therefore, she obtained the Baron's consent to visit her relation, and set off, taking only Aurelia with her, indisposition preventing the Baron from accompanying her at that time; and he has since chosen to remain here.

"Now, however, misfortune had begun to make determined inroads into our house; for the Baroness had not been long absent before she wrote home, that Hermogen was suddenly seized by a melancholy, on which no society or advice of physicians seemed to have any beneficial influence; and that this even broke out oftentimes into fits of delirious rage. Day after day he wandered about all alone, cursing and denouncing himself and his cruel destiny; while all endeavours of his friends to recover him from this frightful state had been hitherto ineffectual.

"You may suppose, reverend sir, how painful and distressing was the impression that all this made upon the Baron. The sight of his son under such a fearful malady, would, in his present state, have agitated him too much. I therefore went to town alone.

"By the strong measures that had been adopted, Hermogen was already cured of these violent out-breakings of madness described by the Baroness; but a settled melancholy had fallen upon him, against which the physicians seemed to think that all aid would be unavailing.

"On seeing me, he was deeply moved. He told me that an unhappy destiny, with which it was in vain to struggle, drove him to renounce for ever the station which he had till then held; and that only as a monk could he hope for tranquillity in this world, or rescue his soul from eternal destruction. Accordingly, I found him already in the dress, in which you, reverend sir, may have observed him this morning; but notwithstanding his resistance, I succeeded in bringing him hither.

"He is now tranquil, but never for a moment relinquishes the *one* insane idea which has taken possession of him; and all attempts to extort a disclosure of the event which has brought him into his misery remain fruitless, though the revealing of this secret would probably afford the first means of contributing to its alleviation.

"Some time ago the Baroness wrote, that, by advice of her confessor, she would send hither a monk of his acquaintance, whose intercourse and consoling admonitions would probably have more influence than anything else on Hermogen, as his madness had evidently taken a devotional turn. I am greatly rejoiced, sir, that the choice has fallen on you, whom a chance the most fortunate for us had led to the *residenz*. By attending to the directions that I now give you, I trust that you may restore to a broken-hearted and deeply-afflicted family, that repose which they have so long lost.

"Your endeavours ought, in my opinion, to be directed to *two* especial objects. In the first place, inquire out this horrible secret, by which Hermogen is oppressed. His bosom will be lighter if it is once disclosed, whether in

ordinary conversation, or in the confessional; and the church, instead of burying him within its walls, will again restore him to the world.

"In the second place, you should make yourself better acquainted with the Baroness. You know all that I have to communicate—You are probably already of my opinion, though I have not sufficient *proofs* for entering into an open accusation; but I know, that when you see, and become intimate with Euphemia, you will entertain the same conviction that I do. She is, however, by temperament, inclined to religion, at least her imagination is easily roused. Perhaps, therefore, by your extraordinary gifts of eloquence, you may penetrate deeply into her heart. You may agitate and terrify her into repentance of her crimes, and of that treachery against her best friends, by which, of necessity, she must work for herself everlasting torments.

"Yet one remark more, reverend sir, I must hazard. Many times it has appeared to me as if the Baron, too, had on his mind some secret grief, of which he conceals from me the cause. Besides his openly declared anxiety on account of Hermogen, he contends visibly with painful thoughts, which constantly harass him. It has often suggested itself to me, that he may perhaps, by some evil chance, have discovered the Baroness's criminality, and this by traces more certain and unambiguous than those which have occurred to me. Therefore, reverend sir, I must finally recommend also the Baron to your spiritual care and attention."

Chapter XIII

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With these words Reinhold closed his long narrative, which had, meanwhile, in a hundred different ways, tormented me. The most extraordinary and irreconcilable contradictions laboured, crossing and re-crossing each other, through my brain.

My very identity, my individuality, was cruelly become the game—the mere plaything, of chance, while as it were, losing myself, and melting away into forms and features not my own, I swam, without hold or stay, upon that wild sea of events, which broke in upon me like raging waves.

I had, indeed, virtually lost myself, for I could no longer recover any power of voluntary action. It was through the interference of my arm that Victorin had been hurled into the abyss; but it was chance, and no impulse of volition, by which I was guided on that occasion. "Now," said I to myself, "I come into his place; but then Reinhold knows Father Medardus, the preacher in the Capuchin Convent, and thus in his estimation I appear only that which I truly am. On the other hand, the adventure with the Baroness, which the Count had in contemplation, falls upon my shoulders, so that in this respect I become again Victorin! To myself an inexplicable riddle, thought becomes a mere chaos. Like the fabulous knight, who fought with his DOUBLE in the dark forest, I am at variance, and combating with myself."

Notwithstanding these internal commotions, I succeeded in counterfeiting tolerably well such composure as is becoming to a priest; and in this mood I came for the first time into the presence of the Baron.

I found him a man advanced in years; but in his now shrunk features, lay yet the evidences of the strength and vivacity which he had once possessed. Not age, indeed, but grief, had ploughed wrinkles in his forehead, and blanched his hair. Notwithstanding this, there prevailed in all that he said, and in his whole behaviour, a cheerfulness and good humour, by which every one must be attracted, and prepossessed in his favour.

When the old steward presented me to him as the monk, whose intended arrival had been noticed by the Baroness, his looks, at first rather doubtful and suspicious, became always more friendly, as, in the meanwhile, Reinhold related how he had heard me preach in the Capuchin Convent of Königswald, and had there convinced himself of my extraordinary gifts of piety and eloquence.

"I know not, my dear Reinhold," said the Baron, "how, or for what reason, the features of this reverend gentleman interest me so much at our first meeting. They certainly awake some remembrance, which yet struggles in vain to

come clearly and fully into light."

It seemed to me, as if he would, in that very moment, break out with the name "Count Victorin!"—In truth, however miraculous it may appear, I had now become actually persuaded that I was the Count; and thereby (aided perhaps by the wine at breakfast, not to speak of the draught from the basket bottle,) I felt the circulation of the blood more powerfully in every vein, and colouring my cheeks with a deeper crimson.

I depended, however, upon Reinhold, who indeed knew me as Brother Medardus, though this now appeared to myself a mere fiction! Nothing could untie or unravel those intricate knots, by which the strange web of my destiny was thus bound together.

According to the Baron's wishes, I was immediately to make acquaintance with Hermogen; but he was nowhere to be found. He had been seen wandering towards the mountains; but the family were on that score quite unconcerned, as he had frequently for days together absented himself in that manner. Accordingly, through the whole afternoon, I remained in the society of the Baron and Reinhold, and by degrees recollected myself so completely, that towards evening I became quite calm, and courageous enough to grapple with the wonderful events and difficulties which now seemed to lie in wait for me.

In the solitude of the night, I opened the Count's portfolio, and convinced myself more particularly that it was Count Victorin who had been hurled into the abyss; yet the letters addressed to him were but of indifferent import, and not one of them gave me any very clear insight as to his real circumstances and condition in life.

Without, therefore, harassing my brain any farther about the matter, I resolved to accommodate myself as skilfully as I could to whatever course *chance* might point out for me; especially, it was requisite that I should wait the issue of my first interview with the mysterious Euphemia.

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On the very next day, the Baroness, with Aurelia, unexpectedly made her appearance. I saw them alight from their carriage, and, received by the Baron, entering the gates of the castle. Unnerved and disquieted, I stepped restlessly up and down in my chamber, under a tempest of extraordinary anticipations. This, however, did not continue long, ere I was summoned down stairs.

The Baroness came forward to meet me. She was an eminently beautiful woman, still in the full bloom of her charms. There was in her countenance and *tout ensemble* a voluptuous tranquillity, diversified only by the restless gleam of her eyes, which were to an unparalleled degree fiery and expressive.

As soon as she beheld me she seemed involuntarily to start, and betrayed extraordinary emotion. Her voice faltered, she could scarcely command words.

This visible embarrassment on her part gave me courage. I looked her boldly in the face, and, in the conventual manner, gave her my blessing. Hereupon she became all at once deadly pale, and was obliged to seat herself on a sofa. Reinhold meanwhile looked on me as if quite satisfied, and even with smiles of good humour.

At that moment the door opened, and the Baron entered with Aurelia.

As soon as I had set eyes on this girl, it seemed as if a gleam of light from heaven flashed around me, and penetrated to my very heart, kindling up mysterious and long-lost emotions—the most ardent longings—the raptures of the most fervent love. All indeed that I had formerly felt seemed only like obscure and shadowy indications of that which now stepped forth at once into reality and life. Nay, life itself dawned for the first time, glittering, variegated, and splendid before me, and all that I had known before lay cold and dead, as if under the desolate shadows of night.

It was she herself—the same mysterious unknown whom I had beheld in the vision of the confessional. The melancholy, pious, childlike expression of the dark blue eyes—the delicately formed lips—the neck gently bent down, as if in devout prayer—the tall, slender, yet voluptuous form; all these—they belonged not to Aurelia—it was herself, the blessed St Rosalia! Even the minutest particulars of dress—for example, the sky-blue shawl, which the young Baroness had now thrown over her shoulders, was precisely the same worn by the saint in the picture, and by the unknown of my vision.

What was now the luxuriant beauty of Euphemia compared with the divine charms of this celestial visitant? Only *her, her* alone could I behold, while all around was faded into coldness and obscurity.

It was impossible that my inward emotion could escape the notice of the by-standers.

"What is the matter with you, reverend sir?" said the Baron; "you seem agitated in an extraordinary degree."—By these words I was directly brought to myself, and I felt rising up within me a supernatural power,—a courage till then unknown,—to encounter all obstacles, if *she*—if *Aurelia* were to be the prize to reward me for the combat.

"Rejoice, *Herr Baron*!" cried I, as if seized by a sudden fit of inspiration —"rejoice, for a female saint is sent down from heaven among us. The heavens, too, will soon be opened in cloudless serenity, and the immaculate St Rosalia will diffuse blessings and consolation on the devout souls who humbly and faithfully pay to her their homage and adoration. Even now I hear the anthem,—the choral notes of glorified spirits, who long for the society of the saint, and who, calling on her in song, hover down from their resplendent thrones. I see her features, beaming in the divine *halo* of beatification, lifted up towards the seraphic choir, that are already visible to her eyes. *Sancta Rosalia, ora pro nobis!*"

Hereupon I fell on my knees, with mine eyes uplifted to heaven, my hands folded in prayer, and all present mechanically followed my example. No one ventured to question me any farther. This sudden ebullition was imputed to some extraordinary inspiration, and the Baron gravely resolved to have mass said at the altar of St Rosalia in the *residenz*.

In this manner I had completely rescued myself from my present embarrassment; and I was resolved from henceforward to venture all things, for Aurelia was at stake, who was now far dearer to me than life.

The Baroness meanwhile appeared in a very strange and inexplicable mood. Her looks followed me; but when I met them, quite composedly and unconcerned, she averted her eyes, which then wandered about unsteadily and wildly. As for Aurelia, I could only guess at her agitation; for she had drawn down her veil, and gazed stedfastly on a cross which was hung by a rosary from her neck. At last the family retired into another chamber. I made use of the opportunity, and hastened down into the garden, where, in a state of the wildest excitement, I rushed through the walks, labouring with, and revolving a thousand resolutions, ideas, and plans, for my future life in the castle.

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Through this day I did not again meet Aurelia. It was already evening, when Reinhold appeared, and said that the Baroness, who had been deeply affected by my pious and inspired discourse of that morning, wished to speak with me alone in her chamber.

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When I had entered the room, and had, by her directions, closed and bolted the door, she advanced a few steps towards me, then taking me by both arms, and looking fixedly in my face, "Is it possible?" said she—"art thou Medardus, the Capuchin monk?—But the voice—the figure—your eyes—your hair,—speak, or I shall perish in this torment of suspense and apprehension!"

"VICTORIN!" replied I, in a whisper; and again this word was not mine, but suggested to me by some unknown and supernatural power;—then, to my utter astonishment and consternation—

(There is a hiatus in the MS. at this place.)

Chapter XIV

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It was in my power, doubtless, to have fled from the castle, but in doing so—in saving myself from new crimes—I must have fled also *from Aurelia*. I had made the resolution (in which I was determined to persevere) to venture all things for *her* sake, and especially for the chance of renewing that conversation which the sanctity of the confessional wholly prohibited.

It was on her account, therefore, that I had now involved myself in enormous guilt; but though conscious of this as the cause, I did not escape the torments of remorse and the bitterest self-condemnation. A kind of horror seized on me when I thought of meeting Aurelia again, which, however, was very soon to happen, namely, at the supper-table. It seemed as if her pious angelic looks would directly accuse me of mortal sin, and as if, unmasked and detected, I should sink into utter disgrace and annihilation. From similar reasons, also, I could not bear to see the Baroness immediately after that interview, and all this induced me, under the pretext of having my devotions to perform, to shut myself up in my room, and remain there, when intimation was sent to me that supper was ready.

Only a few days, however, were required in order to banish all fear and embarrassment. The outward behaviour of the Baroness was in the highest degree guarded and amiable; and the more that, in my character of Count Victorin, I acquired ascendancy over her, the more she seemed to redouble her attention and affectionate solicitude for the Baron.

She confessed to me, however, that she many times laboured under the most fearful perplexity; that my *tonsure*, my long beard, and my genuine conventual gait, (which last, however, I did not now keep up so strictly as before,) had caused to her a thousand indefinable apprehensions; nay, upon my sudden inspired invocation of St Rosalia, she had become almost persuaded that some extraordinary fatality had annihilated the plan which, along with Victorin, she had so admirably laid, and had brought a miserable Capuchin monk into his place.

She admired, however, the extent of my precautions in actually taking the tonsure, in allowing my beard to grow, and in having studied my part so exactly, that, even now, she was obliged often to look me sharply in the face, to avoid falling again into painful doubts.

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Meanwhile, Victorin's *chasseur*, disguised as a *bauer*, made his appearance now and then at the end of the park, and I did not neglect to speak with him privately, and admonish him to hold himself in readiness for momentary

flight, if any evil chance should render this necessary.

As for the Baron and Reinhold, they seemed, on the whole, perfectly satisfied, yet frequently troubled me with urgent suggestions that I should direct the best energies of my mind to acquire an influence over the deeply pensive and obstinate Hermogen.

On the contrary, however, I had never been able to interchange with him a single word, so sedulously did he avoid every opportunity of being alone with me; and if by chance we met in the society of his father and the steward, he looked upon me with an expression so marked and extraordinary, that I had considerable difficulty in avoiding obvious embarrassment. It seemed almost as if he could read my very soul, and spy out my most secret thoughts; and as often as he was thus forced into my presence, an unconquerable ill-humour, a malicious irony, and indeed rage, with difficulty restrained, were visible on his pale features.

It happened that once when I was taking a walk in the park, I perceived him, quite unexpectedly, coming up to meet me. I held this for the fittest possible moment to clear up the painful circumstances in which I was placed with regard to him; and accordingly, when, as usual, he wished to escape, I ventured to take him by the arm, and my old talent of eloquence enabled me now to speak so impressively, and with so much energy, that at last he could not help being attentive, and shewed, as I thought, some favourable symptoms of emotion.

We had seated ourselves on a stone bench at the end of a walk which led towards the castle. In discourse, my inspiration, as usual, increased. I maintained, that it was in the highest degree sinful for a man, thus devoured by inward grief, to despise the consolation and assistance of the church, which can raise up the fallen, and might enable him to fulfil all purposes and duties of this life, which, by the goodness of the Supreme Power, were yet held invitingly before him.

I insisted, that even the most depraved criminal need not doubt of the grace and favour of Heaven, and that the indulgence of such doubts might alone deprive him of the temporal happiness, and salvation hereafter, which he would otherwise obtain. At last I demanded that he should directly unload his conscience by confessing to me, promising him, at the same time, on the usual conditions of contrition, penance, and amendment, absolution for every sin that he might have committed.

Hereupon he rose up. His frame seemed to heave and dilate with indignation; —his brows were contracted—his eyes glared—a burning red flew at once over his before pale countenance.

"Art thou," cried he, with a voice, by the depth and wildness of whose tones I was involuntarily agitated,—"art thou then thyself free from sin, that thou venturest, like the most pure—nay, like the Divinity whom thou blasphemest, to look into the secrets of my bosom?—Thou, forsooth, would'st promise me forgiveness—thou, who for thyself wilt vainly strive for pardon, and against whom the regions of the blest are for ever closed!—Miserable hypocrite!

soon will the hour of retribution be at hand, and trodden into the dust like a poisonous reptile, shalt thou writhe in misery and death, struggling in vain for aid and release from thy nameless torment, till thou perishest in madness and despair!"

Hereupon he turned round, and quickly disappeared. I had no power to detain him—I was, indeed, utterly crushed and annihilated. All my composure and courage had fled, and I saw no means by which confidence and safety could again be recovered.

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At length I observed the Baroness coming out of the castle, dressed as if for a walk. With her only, in this difficulty, could I hope to find assistance or consolation. I hastened, therefore, to meet her.

At first she seemed terrified at my disordered appearance—inquired after the cause of it; and I described to her the whole scene which I had just now encountered with the insane Hermogen, expressing also my terror and apprehension, lest he might, perhaps, by some inexplicable chance, have got possession of, and might betray, our secret intercourse.

By all this Euphemia did not appear in the least moved. On the contrary, she smiled with an expression of irony and malice so extraordinary, that I was seized with involuntary horror.

"Let us go deeper into the park," said she, "for here we might be observed, and it might be deemed mysterious if the reverend Father Medardus were to speak to me with such vehemence."

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"Be composed then, Victorin," said Euphemia; "you may make yourself perfectly tranquil as to all this, which has brought you into such fear and trouble. Indeed, it is on the whole fortunate, that this adventure has happened with Hermogen; for I have thus an opportunity of speaking to you on many things of which I had too long been silent.

"You must confess, that I wield a strange kind of intellectual supremacy over all those by whom I am in this life surrounded; and to possess and exercise this privilege, is, I believe, much more easy for a woman than for a man. Not only, however, must we for this purpose enjoy that superiority of personal beauty which Nature has granted to us, but also many peculiar attributes of mind. Above all, the individual, who, in such undertakings, expects to succeed, must possess the power of stepping, as it were, out of herself,—of contemplating her *own individuality* from an external point, (that is to say, as it is beheld by others;) for our own identity, when viewed in this manner, serves like an obedient implement—a passive means of obtaining whatever object we have proposed to ourselves, as the highest and most desirable in life.

"Can there be anything more admirable than an existence which rules over that of others, so that we may exert perfect empire over the insipid beings—the phantom shapes, by which we are here surrounded, and command them, as if by magic spells, to minister to our enjoyments?

"You, Victorin, belong to the few who have hitherto understood me. You had also acquired this power of looking, as if with others' eyes, upon yourself; and I have therefore judged you not unworthy to be raised as my partner on the throne of this intellectual kingdom. The mystery which we were obliged to keep up, heightened the charm of this union; our apparent separation only gave wider scope for our fantastic humour, which played with and scorned the conventional laws of ordinary life.

"Do not our present meetings constitute the boldest piece of adventure, that spirits, mocking at all conventional limitations, ever dared to encounter? Even in this new character which you have assumed, the metamorphosis depends not on your dress merely. It seems, also, as if the mind, accommodating itself to the ruling principle, worked outwardly in such a manner, that even the bodily form becomes plastic and obedient, moulding itself in turns, according to that plan and destination which the higher powers of volition had conceived and laid down.

"How completely I myself despise all ordinary rules, you, Victorin, are already aware. The Baron has now become, in my estimation, a disgusting, worn-out implement, which, having been used for my past purposes, lies dead, like a run-down piece of clock-work, before me—Reinhold is too contemptible and narrow-minded to be worthy of a thought—Aurelia is a good, pious, and simple-hearted child—We have nothing to do but with Hermogen.

"Already have I confessed to you, that the first time I saw this youth, he made on me a wonderful and indelible impression; but of what afterwards passed betwixt us, you have never yet been fully aware. I had even looked on him as capable of entering into those lofty schemes, into that higher sphere of enjoyment, which I could have opened for him; but for once, I was completely deceived. There existed within him some principle inimical and hostile towards me, which manifested itself in perpetual contradiction to my plans—nay, the very spells by which I fettered others, had on him an effect quite opposite and repelling. He remained always cold, darkly reserved, or, at best, utterly indifferent, till at last my resentment was roused; I determined on revenge, but, above all, I resolved that my former power should not be thus meanly baffled and subdued, and that his indifference should sooner or later be fearfully overcome.

"On this combat I had already decided, when the Baron happened to say, that he had proposed for me a marriage with Hermogen, to which the latter would by no means agree. Like a gleam of inspiration, the thought at that moment rose within me, that I might myself, by a marriage with the Baron, at once clear away those conventional limitations which had hitherto at times disgustingly forced themselves in my way.

"But as to that marriage, Victorin, I have already frequently spoken with you. To your doubts, as to whether it could ever take place, I soon opposed actual performance. In short, as you know, in the course of a few days, I succeeded in transforming the grave old gentleman into a silly tender lover. Nay, he was forced to look on those plans which wholly originated from my agency, (and to which he scarcely dared to give utterance,) as the offspring of his own foolish brain, and the fulfilment of his own heartfelt wishes. Still, in the back ground, concealed indeed, but not less deeply traced, lay the thoughts of my revenge on Hermogen, which would now be more easy, and in execution far more perfect.

"If I knew less of your character, if I were not aware that you are fully capable of entering into my views, I would no doubt hesitate to inform you of what afterwards occurred.

"I took various opportunities of attracting Hermogen's attention. When in the *residenz*, I appeared gloomy and reserved—and afforded, in this respect, a powerful contrast with himself, for he was then cheerful and active in his own pursuits, and, to most people, frank and disengaged in manner. The interval was long and tedious, however, before my designs could be brought into execution.

"During my last visit in town, my uncle's illness forbade all brilliant assemblies, and I was obliged even to decline the visits of my nearest acquaintance. Hermogen called upon me, perhaps only to fulfil the duty which he owed to a step-mother. He found me sunk in the most gloomy reflections; and when, astonished at this sudden revolution, he anxiously inquired the cause, I confessed to him that the Baron's infirm state of health, which he only with difficulty concealed, made me afraid that I should soon lose him, which idea was to me terrible and insupportable.

"On hearing this, he was obviously affected; and when I went on to paint to him, in the liveliest colours, the happiness of my domestic circumstances with the Baron, entering into minute details of our mode of life in the country—when, moreover, I spoke at greater length of the Baron's admirable disposition, and represented his whole character in the most glowing terms, so that it always appeared more and more how deeply I honoured him, nay, how my very existence depended on his,—then, obviously, Hermogen's astonishment and perplexity increased to an even unexpected degree. He visibly struggled and contended with himself, but I had already triumphed. The principle, whatever it was, that lived within him, and had hitherto so hostilely acted against me, was overcome—he had spoken with me alone, and was deeply moved—he had beheld me in a new light—his indifference was subdued, and his tranquillity lost. My triumph became the more certain, when, on the following evening, he came again to visit me.

"He found me alone, still more gloomy and more agitated than on the preceding night. I spoke as before of the Baron, and of my inexpressible longing to return to the country, and to see him again. Hermogen soon lost all self-possession—he hung enraptured on my looks, and their light fell like consuming fire into his heart.

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"In a word, I succeeded. The consequences were more horrible than I had supposed; yet on this account my victory was the more brilliant. The dominion which I had now so unequivocally gained over Hermogen had utterly broken his spirit. He fell, as you know, into madness, though till now you were not aware of the exact reason of this.

"It is a peculiar attribute of madmen, that they can often look more deeply than others into the hearts of those by whom they are surrounded. It seems as if their own minds, being free from rational control, stand in nearer relationship with the spiritual world, and are more liable to be excited sympathetically by the emotions of another. Thus oftentimes they pronounce aloud our own thoughts, like a supernatural echo, whence we are startled as if we heard the voice even of a second self.

"On these principles, it may indeed have happened that Hermogen, considering the peculiar footing on which we stand, has actually looked through your disguise, and on this account is hostilely disposed toward us; but as to any danger from him on this account, that is by no means to be apprehended. Suppose even that he were to break out into open enmity—should proclaim aloud, 'Trust not this cowled priest—he is not what he seems!' yet who would look upon this as less or more than a delirious phantasm of his malady, more especially as Reinhold has been so good as to recognize in you the reverend Father Medardus?

"In the meanwhile, however, it remains certain, that you cannot, as I had hoped, gain a favourable influence over Hermogen. My revenge, however, is fulfilled, and I now look upon him, even as I regard the Baron, like a broken *marionette*—a worn-out plaything; become, at last, so much the more tiresome, as he probably considers his meeting with me here as an act of penitence, and, on this account, haunts and persecutes me, as you must have observed, with his dead-alive, staring, and spectral eyes.

"In short, he must, in one way or another, be got rid of; and I thought, by your acquiring an influence over him, he might have been confirmed in his notions of going into a convent, and to have contrived, that the Baron and Reinhold should be persuaded of the propriety of this design. Hermogen, to say the truth, is to me, in the highest degree, intolerable. His looks often agitate me, so that I can hardly command myself; and, for certain, he must, by some means or other, be removed.

"The only person before whom he appears quite in a different character, is Aurelia. By means of that girl only, can you gain any influence over Hermogen; for which reason, I shall take care that, for the future, you may to her also obtain nearer access.

"If you find a suitable opportunity, you may communicate to the Baron and Reinhold, that Hermogen has disclosed to you, in confession, a heavy crime, which, according to your religious vows, you are obliged to conceal. But of this, more at another time: act for the best, and only be stedfast and faithful.

Let us reign together over this contemptible world of puppets, which move around us only according to our sovereign will and pleasure. This life must bestow on us its best enjoyments, without forcing on our necks the yoke of its narrow and despicable laws!"

We now saw the Baron at a distance, and went towards him, as if occupied in pious and edifying discourse.

Chapter XV

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There had been nothing wanting, perhaps, but this explanation from Euphemia, to render me fully sensible of my own powers and advantages. I was now placed in a situation from which all things appeared in wholly new colours. As to Euphemia's boast of her mental energy and power over the conduct of others, it only rendered her, in my estimation, worthy of utter contempt. At the very moment when this miserable woman believed that she sported in safety with all laws and regulations of this life, she was in reality given up a helpless victim to that destiny, which my hand might in a moment wield against her.

It was, indeed, only by means of that spiritual influence and empire lent to me by the powers of darkness, that she could have been led to look on *that being* as a friend and trust-worthy companion, who, wearing only for her destruction the countenance and figure of her former lover, held her like a demon in his relentless grasp, so that liberation and escape were for her no longer possible.

Euphemia, under the dominion of this wretched illusion, became every moment more despicable in my estimation, and the intercourse which I was obliged to keep up with her, became so much the more disgusting, as Aurelia's image had every day acquired more and more power over my heart; —and it was for her sake only, that I had involved myself in society and in crimes, from which I should otherwise have fled with horror.

I resolved, therefore, from henceforth, to exercise, in the fullest extent, the powers that I now felt were given to me; to seize with mine own hands, that enchanter's rod, of which Euphemia so vainly boasted the possession; and with it, to describe the magic circle, in which the beings around me should move only according to my sovereign wishes.

The Baron and Reinhold were still void of all suspicions, and continued to vie with each other in their endeavours to render my abode at the castle as agreeable as possible. They had not the most distant apprehensions of the circumstances in which I stood with regard to Euphemia. On the contrary, the Baron frequently became eloquent in expressions of gratitude, even assuring me in confidence, that by my interference her affections had been completely restored to him; whereupon I recollected Reinhold's notion, that the Baron, by some means or other, had received intimation of his wife's former infidelity.

Hermogen I now saw but very seldom. He visibly avoided me with fear and trembling, which the Baron and Reinhold very kindly interpreted into devoted awe and reverence for the sanctity and intuitive energy of my character, of which he could not bear the scrutiny.

Aurelia, too, appeared to avoid me as much as possible; and if, by chance, I spoke with her, she was, like Hermogen, timid and embarrassed. I had, therefore, no doubt that the latter had imparted to his sister those apprehensions by which I had been so much alarmed; and yet it seemed to me by no means impracticable to counteract their evil influence.

Probably by the instigation of the Baroness, who wished to bring me nearer to Aurelia, in order that, through her, I might acquire an ascendancy over Hermogen, the Baron requested, that I would give a share of my time to the instruction of his daughter in the higher mysteries of religion. Thus Euphemia herself unconsciously supplied me with the means of arriving at that wished-for goal, which formed the climax of all my most sanguine prospects, and which imagination had so often painted in the most glowing colours.

I shall pass rapidly over the rest of my adventures during my residence in the Baron's castle, the impression of which remains like that of an hideous dream, on which I have no desire to dwell longer than is requisite to preserve connection in the narrative.

For some days, indeed, I remained influenced, for the most part, by the most sanguine hopes, which were yet constantly liable to disappointment. I had hitherto seen Aurelia only at short intervals, and in the society of others;—then, at every meeting, her beauty appeared more and more heavenly; her voice breathed more exquisite music; and the passionate impressions under which I laboured, were such, that I used, after these interviews, to run forth, if possible, into the park—search out some covert the wildest and most secluded, where I threw myself on the ground, and gave up my whole soul to the delirium of love.

At other times, I sought in meetings with the Baroness a temporary refuge from agitations, with which I could scarcely contend. I formed a thousand plans for leaving the castle, and of inducing Aurelia to be the companion of my flight; but all were one by one renounced as hopeless.

Now, however, I was to meet her frequently—and *alone*. I summoned, therefore, all my talents of eloquence and energies of mind, to clothe my religious instructions in such language, that I might by this means direct her affections to her instructor, until, overpowered by her own feelings, she should at last throw herself into my arms.

Instead, however, of succeeding in my designs against Aurelia, the only consequence of my endeavours was to augment tenfold my own intolerable disquietude. A thousand times did I say to myself, How is this possible? Can Aurelia be the same Unknown—the visitant of the confessional? Devoutly, with folded hands and downcast eyes, she listened to me; but not one symptom of emotion, not the slightest sigh, betrayed any deeper operation of my words. Even if I dropt obscure hints of our former meeting, she remained unmoved.

I was therefore, of necessity, brought back to the belief and conviction, that the adventure of the confessional was but a dream. Yet if so, what import

could be attached to the supernatural liveliness of that vision, except that it must have been an anticipation of what was now to come—the promise of a higher power, that Aurelia—the living realization of that phantom—was yet to be mine?

Baffled, however, in all my attempts,—driven oftentimes to rage and despondency,—I brooded over new plans; and while obliged to counterfeit pleasure in the society of Euphemia, and feeling only hatred and impatience, my looks and behaviour assumed a horrible expression, at which she seemed involuntarily to tremble. Still, of the *real* mystery concealed in my bosom, she had no suspicion, but gave way without a struggle to that supremacy which I exerted over her, and which daily continued to increase.

Frequently the thought occurred to my mind, that, by assuming proper courage, by one decisive step, however violent, I might put an end to the torments of suspense under which I laboured,—that on my very next meeting with Aurelia, I might cast off the mask, and renounce all subterfuge and stratagem. I went to her more than once, *resolved* to carry some plan of this kind into effect; but when I looked at Aurelia, and beheld the calm piety, the energy of innocence in her seraphic features, it seemed as if an angel stood by her, protecting her, and bidding defiance to the power of the enemy. At such times, a cold shuddering vibrated through my limbs, and my former resolutions were completely broken.

At last, the thought occurred to me of joining with her more frequently in prayer.

[3]

I had no power to prevent this. I was crushed and annihilated, as if a thunderbolt had struck me to the earth. She fled instantly to the next room. The door opened, and there appeared—Hermogen! He stood glaring upon me with the fixed, horrid look of the wildest insanity. Then, recollecting that such persons are most likely to be tamed by cool, and daring defiance, I collected all my strength, and went up to him.—"Madman," cried I, with a deep commanding voice, "wherefore this intrusion? What wouldst thou here?"

In this plan, however, I was completely baffled. Hermogen stretched out his right hand, and, in a hollow, frightful tone,—"I would contend with thee," said he, "but I have no sword; and there is blood on thy face! Thou art a murderer!"

Thereupon he abruptly vanished, slamming the door violently behind him, and left me alone, grinding my teeth with rage and despair. No one appeared, however. It was evident that he had not spread any immediate alarm, so that I had time to recover self-possession, and began, ere long, to feel confident, that I should yet fall on means to avoid any evil consequences of this error.

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(The monk here goes on to relate, that he remained yet several days in the Baron's castle, during which he encountered many adventures, which it is

thought not advisable to transcribe. Indeed, perhaps the whole of this section might have well been condensed, or given but in outline. It is requisite to observe, that these adventures are wound up by the death of the Baroness and of Hermogen; that of the former, by means of poison, which she had prepared for Medardus; and of the latter, in single combat with the monk, who, in self-defence, killed his antagonist.)

[4]

When Hermogen fell, I ran in wild frenzy down stairs. Then I heard shrilling voices through the castle, that cried aloud, "Murder! murder!"

Lights hovered about here and there, and I heard hasty steps sounding along the corridor and passages. Terror now utterly overpowered me, so that, from exhaustion, I fell down on a remote private staircase. The noise always became louder, and there was more and more light in the castle. I heard too that the outcries came nearer and nearer—"Murder! murder!" At last I distinguished the voices of the Baron and Reinhold, who spoke violently with the servants. Whither now could I possibly fly? Where conceal myself? Only a few moments before, when I had spoken, for the last time, with the detestable Euphemia, it had seemed to me, as if, with the deadly weapon in my hand, I could have boldly stepped forth, and that no one would have dared to withstand me.

Now, however, I contended in vain with my unconquerable fear. At last, I found myself on the great staircase. The tumult had withdrawn itself to the chambers of the Baroness, and there was an interval, therefore, of comparative tranquillity. I roused myself accordingly; and, with three vehement bounds, clinging by the staircase rail, I was arrived at the ground-floor, and within a few steps of the outward gate.

Then, suddenly, I heard a frightful piercing shriek, which reverberated through the vaulted passages, and resembled that which I had observed on the preceding night. "She is dead," said I to myself, in a hollow voice; "she has worked her own destruction, by means of the poison that she had prepared for me!"

But now, once more, I heard new and fearful shrieks from the apartments of the Baroness. It was the voice of Aurelia, screaming in terror, for help; and, by this, my whole feelings were once more changed. Again the reiterated cry of "Murder! murder!" sounded through the castle. The footsteps approached nearer through a staircase leading downwards. They were bearing, as I conceived, the dead body of Hermogen.

"Haste, haste, after him!—seize the murderer!" These words were uttered in the voice of Reinhold.

Hereupon I broke out into a vehement and horrid laughter, so that my voice echoed through the vaulted corridors, and I cried aloud, "Poor insane wretches! would you strive to interfere with and arrest that destiny, which inflicts only just and righteous punishment on the guilty?"

They stopped suddenly. They remained as if rooted to one spot on the staircase. I wished no longer to fly. I thought rather of advancing decidedly and boldly to meet them, and announcing the vengeance of God in words of thunder on the wicked.

But, oh horrible sight! at that moment arose, and stood bodily before me, the hideous blood-stained and distorted figure of Victorin! Methought it was not *I*, but *he*, that had spoken the words in which I thought to triumph! At the first glance of this apparition, (whether real or imaginary,) my hair stood on end with horror.

I thought no longer of resistance, but of flight. I rushed through the gates of the castle, and fled in delirious terror away through the well-known walks of the park.

I was soon in the free, open country; but I had intuitively chosen the road towards the village where Victorin's chasseur had been stationed. Yet I thought not of this. It was instinct only, or chance, that had guided me thither.

I heard behind me the trampling of horses, and summoned up my whole strength to avoid the pursuit which, of course, awaited me. My speed, however, would have availed little; for, though the moon was up, yet dark shadows crossed over my path. At last I fell against the root of a tree, almost fainting and insensible, to the ground.

Soon after, the horses that I had heard came up to me, and halted. Fortunately, my pursuer retained his senses, though I had lost mine. It was Victorin's chasseur.

"For God's sake, my lord," said he, "what has happened in the castle! There is a cry of murder. Already the whole village is in an uproar."

To this I made him no answer; indeed I was unable to speak.

"Well, whatever the truth may be," continued he, "some good genius has put it into my head to pack up, and to ride hither from the village. Everything is in the small portmanteau on your horse, my lord; for, of course, we shall have to separate for some time. Something dangerous must have happened. Is it not so?"

I raised myself up without a word, and not without great difficulty mounting my horse, I directed the chasseur to return to the village, and there to await my farther commands. As soon as he had disappeared amid the darkness, finding that to ride was disagreeable, I dismounted, and carefully led my horse through the thickets of the pine-tree forest, which now wildly spread itself out before me.

Chapter XVI

*

When the first gleams of the morning sun broke through the dense wood, I found myself on the borders of a clear rivulet, rapidly flowing over a bright bed of pebbles. The horse, which I had laboriously led through the thicket, stood quietly beside me; and I had nothing better to do, than to search into the contents of the portmanteau, with which he was loaded. Accordingly, having found the keys in the portefeuille, I unlocked the small military equipage, and discovered suits of clothes, linen, etc., and, what was of most importance, a purse well filled with ducats and *Frederichs d'or*.

I resolved immediately to change my dress, and disguise as much as possible my appearance. With the help of scissars and a comb, which I found in a dressing-case, I cut off my beard, and brought my head of hair, as well as I could, into order. I then threw off my monk's habit, in which I still found the fatal stiletto, Victorin's letters, and the basket-bottle, with the remainder of the Devil's Elixir.

In a short time I stood there in a lay dress, which fitted well enough, and with a travelling-cap upon my head; so that when I saw my reflection in the rivulet, I could scarcely recognize myself. Soon afterwards, having packed up the portmanteau, and resumed my journey, I came to the outskirts of the wood, and a smoke, which I saw rising before me, accompanied by the clear sound of a bell, gave me to understand that there was a town or hamlet at no great distance. Scarcely had I reached the summit of a rising ground opposite, when a pleasant well-cultivated valley expanded itself before me, in which there was a large flourishing village.

I struck, forthwith, into the broad carriage-road which wound thither, and as soon as the declivity became less steep, mounted my horse, that I might accustom myself as much as possible to riding, in which I had hitherto had no practice whatever.

My character seemed to have changed with my dress. As for my capuchin robes, I had thrown them into the hollow of a decayed tree, and with them had dismissed and banished from my thoughts all the hideous adventures in the castle. I found myself once more spirited and courageous. It now seemed to me that the horrid phantom of Victorin had been only a vision of my own fevered brain, but that my last address to the inhabitants of the castle had indeed been an effect of divine inspiration. It seemed as if I had thus unconsciously wound up and completed the purposes of that mysterious destiny which led me to the Baron's house, and that, like the agent of Omnipotent Providence, I had stepped in, inflicting just vengeance on the guilty.

Only the delightful image of Aurelia lived, as before, unchanged in my remembrance; and I could not think on my thus inevitable separation from her, without extreme pain and affliction. Yet oftentimes it appeared to me, as if, perhaps in some far distant land, I should yet behold her again,—nay, as if borne away by irresistible impulse, she must, at one period or another, become mine.

*

I observed that the people whom I met on the road, invariably stood still to look and gaze after me, so that there must have been something quite unusual and unaccountable in my appearance. I was not interrupted, however, but arrived in due time at the village. It was of considerable extent, badly paved, and composed of poor ill-furnished houses, many of which were more like animated monsters, like gigantic visages mounted on claw feet, after the distorted imagination of Teniers, than dwellings to reside in. The soil on which they stood was damp, therefore most of them were raised on wooden posts, as if on legs, from the ground. The roofs, moreover, had sky-lights like protruding eyes, while the door, with its staircase, might be compared to mouth and chin, and the windows would, in a drawing, have served for cheek-bones. It was a grotesque town; a spot such as can only be found in the retired inland parts of Germany, where trade exists not, husbandry is but indifferent, and where the post-roads are not much frequented.

It was not difficult, therefore, in such a place, to find out the best inn, (where there was but one.) When I pulled up the reins at the door, the landlord, a heavy fat man, with a green glazed night-cap on his head, was so completely confounded by my looks, that he was evidently struck speechless. He said nothing, but stared as if half petrified by his own apprehensions, or occasionally twisted his mouth into an ironical grin.

Without attending to these symptoms, I desired that my horse should be put carefully into the stable, and ordered breakfast for myself. I was shewn into the public room, where there were several tables, and while I was engaged over a warm ragout, and a bottle of wine, there were gradually a large company of *bauers* collecting around me, that looked occasionally as if half afraid, casting significant glances, and whispering with each other.

The party became always more and more numerous. Evidently not being restrained by the laws of good breeding, they at last formed a regular circle, and stared at me in stupid astonishment. All the while, I endeavoured to preserve the most perfect composure; and when I had finished the ragout and bottle of *vin ordinaire*, I called in a loud tone for the landlord, desiring him to "saddle my horse, and replace my portmanteau."

He came accordingly, and retired with a significant grin upon his visage. Soon afterwards he returned, in company with a tall formal-looking man, who, with a stern official air, and a truly ridiculous gravity, stepped up to me. He looked me directly in the face. I boldly answered his looks, rose up also, and placed myself right before him. This seemed in a considerable degree to disturb his composure, and he looked round rather confusedly on the

numerous assemblage.

"Well, sir," said I, "what's the matter?—You seem to have something particular to say to me, and I shall be obliged by your getting through with it as quickly as possible."

After divers hums and ha's, he then began to speak, endeavouring to give to every word and tone prodigious importance.

"Sir," said he, "you cannot go from this place without rendering an account to us, the Judge, circumstantially, who you are, according to all particulars, as to birth, rank, and dignity; *item*, whence you came; *item*, whither you intend to go, with all particulars; *item*, the situation of place, the name of province and town, and whatever is farther requisite to be known and observed. And besides all this, you must exhibit to us, the Judge, a pass, written and subscribed, and sealed, according to all particulars, as is legal and customary."

I had indeed never once recollected that it would be necessary for me to assume some name or another; and still less had I reflected that the peculiarities of my appearance, so unsuitable to my remains of monastic mien and gesture, and even my extraordinary beard and tonsure, would bring me every moment under the embarrassment of questions and misunderstandings.

The demands of the village Judge, therefore, came upon me so unexpectedly, that I considered for some moments in vain, how I should give him a satisfactory answer.

I resolved, in the first place, to try what decisive boldness would do, and pronounced in a firm voice,—"Who I am, I have reason to conceal; and therefore you will ask in vain for my pass. Besides, I recommend it to you to beware how, with your contemptible circumlocutions, you detain, even for a moment, a person of rank and consequence."

"Ho, ho!" cried the village Judge, taking out a great snuff-box, into which, as he helped himself, the hands of no less than five bailiffs behind him were thrust at once, delving out enormous pinches—"Ho, ho! not so rough, if you please, most worshipful sir. Your excellency must be pleased to submit to the examination of us, the Judge; for, in a word, there have been some very suspicious figures seen here for some time, wandering among the mountains, that look out and vanish again as if the very devil were among us. But we know that these are neither more nor less than cursed vagabonds and thieves, who lie in wait for travellers, committing all sorts of enormities by fire and sword. Now, your appearance, sir, with reverence be it spoken, is exactly that of a portrait which has been sent to us by government, of a most notorious robber and bandit, according to all particulars. So, without any more circumlocutions, or needless discourse, your pass, or you go directly to the tower."

I saw that nothing was to be gained over the man in this way, and prepared myself therefore for a new attempt.

"Mr Judge," said I, "if you would grant me the favour of speaking to you alone, I should easily clear up all your doubts; and in full reliance on your prudence, would reveal to you the cause of my present strange appearance, which seems to you so formidable. There is indeed a mystery—"

"Ha! ha!" replied the Judge, "mysteries to be revealed! I see already how this business is to conclude. Only get away with you there, good people. Watch the doors and windows, and see that nobody gets in or out."

Accordingly we were left alone.

"Mr Judge," said I, "you behold in me an unhappy fugitive, who has succeeded in escaping from a shameful imprisonment, and from the danger of being immured for ever within the walls of a convent. Excuse me for not entering more into particulars of my history, which would only be unravelling a web of the private quarrels and animosities of a revengeful family. A love affair with a girl of low rank was the cause of my misfortune. During my long confinement my beard had grown, and they had also forced me, as you may perceive, to take the tonsure; besides all which, I was, of course, obliged to assume the habit of a monk. It was for the first time here, in the neighbouring forest, that I ventured to stop and change my dress, as I should otherwise have been overtaken in my flight.

"You now perceive whence proceeds that peculiarity in my looks and dress, which appeared so suspicious. You may be convinced, also, that I cannot shew you any pass; but of the truth of my assertions I have here certain illustrations, which I hope will be satisfactory."

With these words I drew out my purse, and laid three glittering ducats on the table; whereupon the assumed gravity of the Judge was involuntarily twisted into smirks and smiles.

"Your proofs, sir," said he, "are sufficiently clear and striking; but don't take it amiss, your excellency, if I remark, that there is yet wanting a certain equality and consistency, according to all particulars. If you wish that I should take the unright for the right, the irregular for the regular, your proofs, at least, must be equally proportioned."

I perfectly understood the rascal, and directly laid another ducat on the table. "Now," said the Judge, "I perceive, indeed, that I had done you injustice by my suspicions. Travel on, sir, in God's name; but observe (as you are probably well accustomed) to avoid, as much as possible, the high roads, till you get rid of your present peculiarity of appearance."

He then opened the door as wide as he could, and called aloud to the people, "The gentleman here is a man of rank and quality, according to all particulars. He has satisfied us the Judge, in a private audience, that he travels *incognito*, that is to say, unknown; and that you, good people, have with this nothing to do.—Now, sir, *bon voyage*!"

Accordingly, my horse was brought from the stable, and as I essayed to mount, the *bauers*, in respectful silence, took off their caps. I wished to get away from them, and to ride as quickly as possible through the gate; but to my extreme confusion, my horse was restive, and began to snort and rear, while my utter ignorance and want of practice in riding rendered it quite impossible for me to bring him forward. Indeed, I soon lost all self-possession; for he wheeled round in circles, till at last, amid the loud laughter of the peasants, I was thrown off into the arms of the innkeeper and the Judge.

"That is a devil of a horse, sir," said the Judge, with a suppressed grin.

"A devil of a horse, indeed!" answered I, beating the dust from my clothes, for I had slipped through their arms to the ground.

They now joined in assisting me once more to mount; but, for the second time, the horse behaved just as before, snorting and foaming; in short, would by no means be brought through the gate.

At last an old man among the crowd cried out, "See, there! see, there! the old witch *Elise* is sitting at the gate, and won't let the gentleman pass, because he has not given her *groschen*."

For the first time now I perceived an old beggar sitting, coiled up like a ball, in a corner by the gate, and with the grin of idiotcy on her features.

"Will the d—d witch not get out of the way?" cried the Judge.

Hereupon the old woman croaked out, "The bloody brother—the bloody brother has given me no groschen!—Do you not see the dead man there lying before him?—The murderer cannot get over him, for the dead man raises himself up; but I will crush him down, if the bloody brother will give me a groschen!"

The Judge had taken the horse by the rein, and, not minding the old woman, would have led it through the gate. In vain, however, were all his endeavours; and the witch continued to cry without ceasing, "Bloody brother, bloody brother—give me groschen!"

At last I forced my hand into my pocket, and threw her money. Shouting and rejoicing, she then started up—"See the groschen!" cried she, "see the groschen that the murderer has given me—see the beautiful groschen!"

Meanwhile my horse neighed aloud; and on the Judge's letting him go, went curvetting and caprioling through the gate. "Now, sir," said he, "the riding goes on fine and admirably, according to all particulars!"

The *bauers*, who had followed me through the gate, laughed again out of all measure, when they beheld me dancing up and down to the powerful movements of my too lively horse, and cried aloud, "See only, see only—he rides like a Capuchin!"

Chapter XVII

*

This whole adventure in the village, especially the disgusting and strange words of the mad-woman, had not a little discomposed me. The best rule which I could now adopt, was of course to get rid as soon as possible of every remarkable trait in my outward appearance, and to assume some name or other, under which I might appear unobserved and unsuspected in the world.

Life now lay before me, as if beneath the dark clouds of impenetrable mystery. What was it possible for me to do, but to give myself up to the current of that stream which bore me irresistibly onward? All bonds by which I was formerly connected with certain duties or situations in the world were now broken and dissevered,—so that I could find no hold or stay by which to pilot my course.

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The high road became always more lively and populous. I met carriages and horsemen, as well as foot passengers. The country was more cultivated, and the hedge-rows were planted with orchard-trees, some of which were yet loaded with the later fruits of autumn. In short, everything already announced, from a distance, the existence of the rich and flourishing commercial town to which I was now drawing near.

In due time it lay visibly before me. Without being questioned, nay, without even being rudely stared at, I rode at once into the suburbs.

A large house, with bright plate-glass windows, over the door of which there was a golden lion, immediately struck my attention. Crowds of people were here streaming in and out at the gate—carriages arrived and departed, while from the rooms on the ground-floor I heard the jovial sounds of laughter and the ringing of glasses.

Scarcely had I pulled up the reins, being yet undecided, when the *hausknecht* officiously sprung out, took my horse by the bridle, and on my dismounting, led him, without asking any questions, to the stable.

The head waiter, smartly dressed, came bustling and rattling, with his bunch of keys at his girdle, and walked before me up stairs. When we came into the second story, he looked at me with a flitting glance of inquiry, and then led me up an *etage* higher, where he shewed me a chamber of moderate dimensions; then politely asked "if I had any commands;" said that "dinner would be ready at two o'clock, in the great hall, No. 10." etc. etc.

"Bring me a bottle of wine," said I. These were indeed the first words which the officious assiduity of these people had left me an opportunity to interpose.

Scarcely had the waiter left me alone, when there was a knocking at the door, and a face looked in, which at once reminded me of the representations that are seen in allegorical pictures, of a comic mask. A pointed red nose—a pair of small glistening eyes—lips drawn upwards into an exquisite grin—a long chin—and, above all this, a high powdered toupée, which, as I afterwards perceived, declined backwards most unexpectedly into a *Titus*;—for his dress, a large ostentatious frill, a fiery-red waistcoat, under which protruded two massy watch-chains—pantaloons—a frock-coat, which in some places was too narrow, in others too wide; of course did not fit anywhere!—Such was the figure that now stepped into the room, retaining all the way the same angle of obeisance which he had assumed at his first entrance, and talking all the time. "I am the *frizeur* of this house," said he; "and beg leave, with the greatest respect, and in the most immeasurable degree, to offer my services!"

There was about this little shrivelled wretch an air and character so irresistibly comical, that I could hardly suppress laughter. His visit, however, was now very *apropos*; and accordingly I told him that my hair had been both neglected, in the course of a long journey, and spoiled by bad cutting. I therefore desired to know, whether he could bring my head into proper order.

He looked at me accordingly with the significant eyes of an artist and *connoisseur*, laid his right hand with an elegant and *gracioso* bend on his breast, and said—

"Bring into order, forsooth! Oh, heavens! Pietro Belcampo, thou whom malignant enviers and traducers have chosen to call Peter Fairfield, even as that divine military fifer and hornist, Giacomo Punto, was called Jack Stitch, —thou, like him, art in truth calumniated and misunderstood. But, indeed, hast thou not thyself placed thy light under a bushel, instead of letting it shine before the world? And yet, should not even the formation of this hand and fingers, the brightness of genius which beams from these eyes, and colours the nose in passing with a beautiful morning red; in short, should not thy *tout ensemble* betray to the first glance of the connoisseur, that there dwells within thee that spirit which strives after the *ideal*? 'Bring into order!'—These are indeed cold words, sir!"

I begged the strange little man not to put himself into such a flutter, as I had the fullest reliance on his skill and cleverness.

"Cleverness!" resumed he with great fervour; "what is cleverness? Who was clever? He who took the measure at five eye-lengths, and then jumping thirty yards, tumbled into the ditch? He who could throw the grain of linseed at thirty steps distance through the eye of a needle? He who hung five hundred weight on the point of his sword, and then balanced it on his nose for six hours, six minutes, six seconds, and a half?—Ha! what is cleverness? Be it what it may, it is foreign to Belcampo, whose whole soul is imbued by art, sacred art.

"*Art*, sir, *art*! My fancy revels in the wonderful formation, the *creation* of locks—in that moulding of character, which indeed the breath of a zephyr in wiry curls builds and annihilates. There, art (or science, as it may, for variety's sake, be called) conceives, developes, labours, and originates! In this, sir, there is indeed something truly divine; for art is not properly that of which men, under this name, speak so much, but rather springs out of all to which this name has been given.

"You understand me, sir; for I perceive that you have a meditative head, as I conclude from that lock which hangs over your excellency's right temple."

I assured him (however falsely) that I completely understood him; and being diverted with the man's originality of humour, I resolved that, holding his boasted science in due respect, I would by no means interrupt his eloquence, however diffuse.

"What then," said I, "do you intend to make of this confused head of mine?"

"All, everything that you please or wish," said the man. "If, however, it may be allowed to Pietro Belcampo to give counsel, then let me first contemplate your excellency's head, in its proper length, breadth, and circumference—your whole figure, too, your mien, your gait, your play of gesture; then I shall be able finally to say whether you belong properly to the antique or romantic, the heroic or pastoral, the *grandios* or *ordinaire*, the *naive* or *satyric*, the humorous or severe; then, accordingly, I shall call up the spirits of Caracalla, of Titus, of Charlemagne, of *Henri Quatre*, of Gustave Adolph, of Virgil, of Tasso, or Boccaccio!

"Inspired by them, the muscles of my fingers will vibrate and quiver, and under the sonorous twittering of the scissars, will proceed the masterpiece of art! I shall be the man, sir, who will perfect your leading characteristic, as it should exhibit itself in real life. But now, let me beg of you, sir, to step up and down through the room. I shall meanwhile contemplate, remark, and record. Let me beg of you, sir!"

I must, of course, accommodate myself to the strange man, therefore did as I was desired, walking up and down the room, endeavouring at the same time to conceal, as much as I could, my inclination to the monastic gait, which, however, it is almost impossible for one by whom it has been thoroughly learned, even after many years, wholly to conquer.

The little man contemplated me with great attention, then began to trip about the room. He sighed and shrugged, even panted and sobbed, then drew out his handkerchief, and wiped the drops from his forehead; at last he stood still, and I inquired "if he was yet resolved how he should operate?" Then, with a deep sigh, he broke out—"Alas, sir! what is the meaning of all this? You have not resigned yourself to your natural character. There was constraint in every movement—a conflict of contending principles. Yet, a few more steps, sir."

Hereupon I absolutely refused to set myself up for show any longer in that manner, and told him plainly, that if he could not *now* resolve what to make

of my hair, I must refuse altogether to have anything to do with him or his art.

"Bury thyself, Pietro!" cried the little man, with great fervour; "go to the grave, for in this world thou art wholly and utterly misunderstood. Here is no confidence, no truth any more to be found!

"Yet, sir, you shall be compelled to acknowledge the depth of my perceptions, and do honour to my genius. In vain did I labour to amalgamate together all the contradictions and conflicts in your character and gestures. In the latter there is something that directly points at monachism. '*Ex profundis clamavi ad te, Domine. Oremus. Et in omnia secula seculorum!*'"

With bitter scorn and mockery the man pronounced these words from the Ritual, in a hoarse croaking voice, imitating, at the same time, to the very life, the postures and gesture of a monk. He turned himself as if before the altar, he kneeled, and rose again. At last he stopped, drew himself up, and assumed a proud look of defiance, stared widely, and cried, "MINE is the world! I am more wealthy, more wise, prudent, and intelligent, than all of ye, ye blind moles! Bend, then, and kneel down before me, in humble submission!

"Look you, sir, that which I have mentioned forms the chief attribute and ingredient in your appearance; and, with your permission, I shall, contemplating your features, your figure, and moods of mind, blend together something of Caracalla, Abelard, and Boccaccio; and proceeding on the idea thus gained, shall, like an inspired sculptor, begin the glorious creation of antique, ethereal, classic locks and curls!"

Imperfect and ridiculous as the man's *expressions* were, yet there was so much home *truth* in his remarks, that I judged it best to conceal nothing from him; I therefore confessed that I had indeed been a monk, and had received the *tonsure*, which, for certain reasons, I now wished as much as possible to keep unobserved.

With the most absurd writhing, twisting, grimaces, and extravagant discourse, the man at last proceeded with his operations on my hair. Now he looked cross and gloomy—now smiled—anon stamped and clenched his fist—then smiled again and stood on tiptoe; in short, it became impossible for me to refrain from laughing, in which I at last indulged very heartily.

After about an hour's work, he had finished, and before he could break afresh into words, which were already on the tip of his tongue, I begged him immediately to go and send up some one who, as a barber, might exhibit the same skill that he had done as a *frizeur*.

With a significant grin, he stepped to the door on tiptoe, shut and bolted it, then tripped back into the middle of the room, and began—"Oh, golden age! where still the hair of the head and of the beard, in one plenitude of waving locks, poured itself out for the adornment of man and the delightful care of the artist! But those days are for ever gone! Man has insanely cast away his noblest ornament, and a shameful race have set themselves to work, with their horrible instruments, to raze and extirpate the beard even to the skin! O ye despicable band of beard-scrapers! whetting your abominable knives upon

black strops stinking with oil, and, in scornful defiance of art, swinging about your tasselled bags, clattering with your pewter basons, splashing about your scalding-hot froth, and asking your unhappy patients whether they will be shaved over the thumb or the spoon! Luckily there are men still—there is at least one Pietro, who labours against your infamous trade, and who, though lowering himself to your wretched office of rooting out the beard, still endeavours to preserve and cherish that little which is allowed to lift itself from the desolate wrecks of Time!

"What are the numberless varieties of whiskers in their elegant windings and curvatures, now softly bending around the cheek, in the fashion of the delicate oval—now melancholily sinking straight down into the depth of the neck—now boldly mounting up even to the corner of the mouth—anon narrowing modestly into small delicate lines, anon spreading out in full unchastised luxuriance,—what, I say, are all these but the invention of our science, in which the high striving after the sublime, the beautiful, and the *ideal*, is unfolded? Ha, then, Pietro, shew what a spirit dwells within thee! Shew what thou art in reality prepared to undertake for the sacred cause of art, while, to the eyes of the ignorant, you appear to be lowering yourself to a mere beard-scraper!"

With these words, the little man had drawn out a complete barber's apparatus, and begun, with, light and skilful touches, to free me from that remaining incumbrance, which had so much offended the eyes of my old friend the Judge. In truth, I came out of his hands completely metamorphosed; and nothing more was necessary but a proper change of dress, in order to escape all danger of provoking, by my appearance, questions or impertinent curiosity.

Belcampo, having packed up his implements, stood smiling on me with great satisfaction. I then said to him, that I was quite unacquainted with the town; and that it would be very satisfactory if he could inform me, how to procure immediately a suit of clothes, according to the newest fashion of the time and place. To reward his trouble, and encourage him in my service, I slipped a ducat into his hand.

Hereupon he seemed absolutely inspired—cast his eyes to the ceiling, and then ogled the ducat in the palm of his hand. "Worthiest of patrons and masters," said he, "in you I have not been deceived. A guardian spirit, indeed, guided my hand, and in the proud waving of these curls—in the eagle flight of these whiskers—your high sentiments are clearly expressed!

"I have, indeed, a friend, a Damon, an Orestes, who will fulfil upon the rest of the body, that which I have commenced upon the head, with the same depth of reflection, and the same light of genius. You perceive, sir, that the individual whom I mean is an artist of costume; which expression I prefer to the trivial one of tailor.

"He, too, willingly luxuriates and loses himself in the *ideal*; and thus forming in his own mind shapes, characters, and physiognomies, he has planned a magazine, a *depot* of the most exquisite dresses. You behold there the modern *elegant*, in all possible shadowings of character, now boldly and energetically

out-shining all competitors—now reserved within himself, and lost to all that is external—now witty and ironical—now melancholy and out of humour—anon bizarre and extravagant, anon plain and citizen-like, according as he wishes to appear, *so* or *so*!

"The youth who, for the first time, ventures to order a coat for himself, without the assistance of mamma, or his tutor,—the man of forty, who must wear powder to conceal grey hairs,—the old man, still vigorous in his enjoyment of life,—the profound student,—the bustling merchant,—the opulent, retired citizen,—all these varieties of character rise up before your eyes, as on a theatre, when you enter the shop of my Damon. But, in a few moments, the masterpieces of my friend's art shall be presented in this very room, for your inspection."

Accordingly, he hopped away in great haste, and soon after re-appeared with a tall, stout, genteelly dressed man, who, as well in his whole behaviour as in his exterior, made the most perfect contrast possible, with the little *frizeur*; and yet, nevertheless, he introduced him to me as his Damon!

Damon sedately measured me with his eyes, and then searched out of a large bale that a boy had carried, several suits of clothes, which exactly corresponded with the wishes that I had expressed. Indeed I then, for the first time, acknowledged the fine *tact* of the *costume-artist*, as the little man had styled him; for he had chosen for me precisely that style of dress, in which, without any hints of reference to rank, profession, birth-place, and so forth, one might glide unobserved through the world. It is, in truth, no easy matter to dress one's self in such manner, that all suspicions of a particular character or pursuit may be avoided. The costume of a citizen of the world should be regulated by the *negative* principle, as, in polite behaviour, more depends on judicious unobtrusive *leaving out*, than on actual performance.

The little man all the while indulged himself in his own absurd and wandering discourse; and as he probably did not meet every day with a listener so willing as I had been, he was, no doubt, unusually brilliant. Damon, however, a grave, and, as it seemed to me, intelligent man, at last cut him short, without mercy; and shaking him by the shoulder, "Fairfield," said he, "you are got again to-day into the old vein—upon the right '*jawing tack*,' as the Dutch mariners say. I would bet any sum, that the gentleman's ears must have ached already with the nonsense which you are pouring out!"

With an air of the deepest melancholy, Belcampo now hung down his head. He then suddenly seized his old weather-beaten hat; and, running quickly to the door, "Such," cried he, "is the lamentable fate—such are the misfortunes of genius! Thus is the character of Belcampo prostituted and defamed, even by his best friends!"

Damon also then took his leave, and, in retiring, said, "He is a coxcomb quite of his own kind, this Fairfield! Much reading has turned his brain; otherwise he is a good-natured fellow, and clever in his own business, on which account I can bear him well enough, since, if a man has good success in any *one* trade, he may be excused a little extravagance on other occasions."

Chapter XVIII

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As soon as I was left alone, I began to look in a large mirror, which hung in the room, and to give myself formal lessons in gait and demeanour. For this purpose, the discovery made by the *frizeur* had given me very necessary hints. Monks acquire a peculiar awkwardness of walk from their long dresses, which confine the limbs, and from their attempt at the same time to move quickly, which the rules of our order enjoin. There is also something farther characteristic in a submissive bending forward of the body, and in the carriage of the arms, which must never hang downwards. All this I endeavoured to unlearn as effectually as possible.

Now, however, I derived most encouragement from the idea, that I was completely transformed in mind, as well as in appearance; that the thread of my former life was wholly broken, so that I could look on its adventures as on transactions foreign to myself, which I had now done with for ever. I had entered on a new state of existence, wherein, if recollections still haunted me, these would every day become fainter and fainter, until at last they wore out, and perished altogether.

When I looked out from the window, the tumult of people, the uninterrupted noise of business which was kept up upon the streets—all was new to me, and was exactly calculated to prolong that levity of mind, which the loquacity of the little man, and my being forced to laugh at him, had excited.

In my new dress I ventured down to the crowded *table d'hote*, and all apprehension vanished, when I found that no one observed me, nay, that even my nearest neighbour did not give himself the trouble of looking at me when I set myself beside him.

In the list of strangers, I had entered my name simply as Mr Leonard, and given myself out for a *particulier*, who travelled for his own pleasure. Of such travellers there might be many in the town, and of course I would escape farther questioning.

After dinner, it afforded me a new and incalculable pleasure to wander through the town, where I found streets much broader and better paved, with far finer houses, than any to which I had yet been accustomed. Luckily there were now preparations set on foot for the approaching great yearly fair, which caused an unusual bustle in every quarter; and I had been told at my hotel that a few days later it would have been impossible for me to obtain lodgings. The richness of the booths, which already began to open, exceeded all that my imagination had ever conceived. *There* were the *choicest* goods from all quarters of the globe; from France, Italy, England, the East and West Indies; from Persia, Turkey, Russia, down to the nearer kingdoms of Hungary and

Poland; and I became confirmed in my conviction that here no one would observe my dress or appearance, since there were natives of all countries, in their proper costumes, parading the streets, or arranging their merchandize. The air was perfumed by the fragrance of Turkish tobacco, as the natives of Constantinople stalked silently about with their long pipes, in dresses which I had till then only seen in books; and there were Persians, who, from their splendour of attire, might have passed for sultans, had not their present occupations proved the contrary.

But as I found my way at last to the streets more particularly allotted to the dealers in all sorts of *bijouterie*, toys, paintings, engravings, and other works of art, my wonder and delight were increased at every step. Amid the infinite variety of objects conducive to luxury and amusement here exhibited, time passed on like a dream. I did not fail to indulge myself in the purchase of several articles of ornament and convenience. A watch and chain, two seal rings, a large *meerschaum* pipe, (which the vender rightly declared to be a *chef d'oeuvre*,) a few books and prints, etc.; all which I ordered to be sent home to my hotel.

On arriving afterwards at the Great Square, in the centre of the town, I was confounded by finding it already occupied by caravans and temporary theatres, filled with wild beasts, travelling players, puppet-shows, giants, dwarfs, panoramas, jugglers, etc. etc. etc.

These sights, however, I did not venture for the present to examine more narrowly, but made my way into the public walks and gardens by which the town is surrounded, and which were now gay with genteel parties, enjoying the afternoon's promenade, enlivened, moreover, with excellent music from harp-players, singers, organists, etc., many of whom, especially of the singers, reminded me of the best music that I had heard in early days, in the house of the choir-master at Königswald.

For a moment, too, I was reminded of his sister, by the countenance, and yet more by the figure, of a girl that passed me, in the midst of a thicket of very dark massive pines, near the Bockenheimer gate; but the recollection was transient; for now, though surrounded by gaiety and music, by sparkling groups and beautiful countenances, (for at Frankenburg, as at Saxe Gotha, almost every female, not in the extreme of old age, is beautiful,) yet by rapid degrees the cheerfulness which I had felt at the commencement of my walk vanished quite away.

All at once I felt within me the solution of the riddle, the explanation of the cause why I was thus changed. I was *alone* in the midst of these happy groups. The trees, the flowers, (withered and yellowed already by the blasts of autumn,) the ruddy gleams of the western sky, and the varieties of the landscape—these, indeed, were like society—these I partook in common with the parties around me—but of all the shapes and forms of men and women, smiling or grave, meditative or gay, that moved about me, I knew *not one*. There was not a single individual in whose breast I could imagine a shadow of apprehension who I really was—what strange chance had brought me hither, or even the least atom of that overpowering load of mystery by which I was weighed down, and which was wholly locked up within my own

bosom.

All this, however convenient at the present moment, made on me an impression hostile, destructive, and almost insupportable. As long as I had the gay booths, the paintings, toys, jewels, sparkling dresses, liqueurs, and confections, tobacco-pipes, books, and engravings around me,—such things, however contemptible in the eyes of one accustomed to the world, had, from their novelty, power enough to rivet my attention, and alienate it from *selfish* fears and despondency. But now, amid these rural walks, surrounded only by happy groups, of whom each individual enjoyed mutual confidence with his neighbour—by husbands and wives, lovers and mistresses, parents and children; amid scenes that reminded me of my early days of innocence, methought I was like a condemned spirit—like a *revenant*, doomed involuntarily to wander on the earth, from whence all, and every one to whom he had been attached, had long since died away!

If I called to mind how, formerly, every visitant at the Capuchin Convent so kindly and respectfully greeted the pulpit orator, and how the whole neighbourhood, and even strangers from remote countries, thirsted after his conversation, rejoicing even in the opportunity of a few words, then my heart was wrung with the bitterest anguish.

I strove against this, however, as much as possible. "That pulpit orator," said I to myself, "was the Monk Medardus, he who is now dead, buried, and (ought to be) forgotten, in the abysses of the mountains—in the darkness of the far-distant pine-tree forest. With him I have nothing to do, for I am alive and active, nay, life itself has for the first time dawned upon me, and begun to offer its varied and substantial enjoyments."

Thus, when in my involuntary waking dreams I recalled the strange and frightful adventures at the castle, I said to myself, "These things are indeed known to me, yet it is to some one else that they refer; over me they can have no influence." This *other* was again the Capuchin; but I was no longer a monk. It was only the never-dying thoughts of Aurelia that united still, by indissoluble ties, my former with my present existence; but when this feeling was truly awoke, like the torment of an incurable malady, it killed and annihilated that spirit of pleasure which had risen up within me. I was then suddenly torn out of those brilliant circles of glittering forms and fantastic imagery, by which life had begun to surround me. The delusions fled. I despised myself for having been pleased for a moment, like a child, with toys and rattles, and once more sunk down, a prey to the darkest and most rayless despondency.

This evening, on my return from the public walks, I visited, for the first time in my life, a theatre. This was to me another new enjoyment; but before reaching thither, my despondency had gained its full influence. The piece performed happened to be a tragedy, and I thought, during the whole performance, only of Aurelia.

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During my residence at Frankenburg, I did not omit to visit some of the many houses of public resort, in which people met to breakfast, *a la fourchette*; to dine, to sup, and enjoy the pleasures of wine, gaming, and conversation. Accordingly, I soon felt a particular preference for a certain hotel in the middle of the town, where, on account of the superior quality of the wines, a numerous society were to be found every night.

At a table, in a room adjoining to the great *salle*, I found regularly, at a fixed hour in the evening, the same persons assembled. Their conversation was always lively and ingenious. Accident at last brought me acquainted with these people, who had thus formed an especial circle for themselves, and who for some time shewed no disposition to bestow on me any share of their attention.

At first, I used to sit quietly in a corner of the room, and drink my wine alone; but on one occasion it so happened that I was able to afford them information on a literary topic which they were discussing, and was in consequence invited to a place at their table, which afterwards was the more willingly kept open for me, as my good address and the extent of my reading and acquirements exactly suited their dispositions.

Thus I obtained, without trouble, some very agreeable acquaintances; and accustoming myself more and more to the world, I became every day more unconcerned, and was able, in great measure, to rub off the rust of my former habits.

For several evenings there had been much talk in this society of a certain painter, (an entire stranger in the town,) who had lately arrived, and during the fair was to hold an exhibition of his works. Every member of the society but myself had seen his pictures, and praised them so highly, that I of course felt anxious for an opportunity of judging for myself, and went accordingly.

The painter was absent when I entered his exhibition-room, but an old man acted as *cicerone*, and named the masters of various old pictures which the artist exhibited along with his own. Among them were many admirable pieces, most of them originals, of celebrated Italian masters, with which I was highly delighted.

At last, I came to a series of pictures which the man said were copies from certain large *frescoes*, designed many years ago. What was now my astonishment, when involuntarily the recollections of my youth here began to dawn upon me, every moment acquiring more distinct forms and livelier colours! These were obviously copies from the Convent of the Lime-Tree. Above all, I recognized most unequivocally, in a holy family, the features of the old pilgrim who had come to us with the miraculous boy! At this sight, the levity in which I had for some time indulged, once more completely declined; and, sunk into the deepest melancholy, I stood long gazing at the group. But when my sight next fell on a portrait (large as life, and admirably done) of my adoptive mother, the Princess, I could not forbear a loud outcry of wonder. This portrait exhibited a most accurate resemblance, (such as Vandyke never failed to give to all his pictures,) the costume was the same in

which she used to walk before the nuns in their procession through the church, and the painter had seized the moment, when, having finished her private devotions, she was leaving her room in full dress, in order to join in that solemnity. The perspective behind shewed the interior of the church, crowded with the expectant congregation.

In the looks of this admirable woman, was fully developed that expression of a mind wholly devoted to Heaven, which was so pre-eminently her own. It now seemed to me as if she implored forgiveness for that unhappy sinner, whom his own crimes had torn from her maternal embraces. I felt once more all the bitterness of contrast between what I now was, and what I *had been*! Feelings long lost and estranged gained their full influence over my heart, and I was borne away by an unspeakable longing after the scenes and impressions of my youth.

Methought I once more heard the south wind sigh through the dark yew-hedges and tall beech-trees of the old manor-house, and traced again the bright wanderings of the Saale, but *not*, as on the occasion of my last visit there, with coldness and indifference! The delusion for a moment was perfect, only to be followed by the bitterness of reality and remorse. Anon, it seemed as if I were again with the good priest of the Cistertian Convent, a cheerful, free-minded, and courageous boy, wandering at will through the wild country, losing himself in rocky recesses of the Thuringian mountains, or shouting and rejoicing because the grand festival of St Bernard was drawing near!

That well-known form of her whom I so deeply revered, was again presented, as if living, before me. Methought, too, I heard her voice.—"Medardus," said she, "hast thou been good and pious?" The well-known tones, deepened by anxiety and love, floated like soft music around me. "Hast thou been good and pious?" Alas! what must now be my answer? The beautiful picture, traced by the pencil of Innocence and Hope, is clouded and defaced for ever—the vernal skies are darkened—the cold tempest winds of grief and remorse desolate the landscape. I have heaped up crime on crime. On the first breach of my monastic vows followed murder; and *now*, is not my daily life of dissipation and deceit, but the certain commencement of crimes yet to come?

These thoughts, and many more, that it would require a volume to delineate, rushed at once upon me, so that, completely overpowered, I sunk, half-fainting, into a chair, and burst into tears.

The old man was terrified. "For God's sake, sir," said he, "what's the matter? what has happened to you?"

"That picture," said I, in a hollow suppressed voice, "resembles with such accuracy a near relation whom I lost by a cruel and untimely death, that it has deeply affected me." With these words I arose, and assumed as much composure as possible.

"Come, sir," said this man, "such recollections are far too painful, and should be avoided. There is yet one portrait here, which my master considers his best, and which you have not seen. It is painted after the life, and has only just now been finished. We have hung a curtain before it, that the sun might

not injure the fresh colours."

The old man placed me carefully in the proper light, and then drew up the curtain—IT WAS AURELIA!

Chapter XIX

*

At first, a kind of horror seized upon me; for I knew not if this could be reality, or the mockery of that relentless Fiend, that would lure me on to destruction. But, with a violent effort, I summoned up courage; an entire revolution again took place in my mind; new hopes and feelings began to break through the gloom and melancholy, which for a space had gathered around me.

With eager eyes, I devoured the charms of Aurelia, which from the enchanted canvass now gleamed out in full splendour before me. Yet, alas! did not these childlike pious looks seem only to complain against the murderer of her brother? The mystery of his guilt, however, which had been deposited in my bosom, gave me confidence; and even a malicious spirit of scorn and irony rose within me. I only regretted now, that in that fatal night of Hermogen's death, Aurelia had not become mine. His appearance had then frustrated my plans; but with death he had expiated the rashness of his attempts against me. —"Aurelia," said I, "yet survives; and this alone is sufficient to encourage my hopes of one day possessing her. From the destiny in which she is involved, it is impossible for her to escape; for am not I myself the living impersonization of the fate to which she is subjected?"

All the sadly-cherished dreams of youth, all feelings of piety which the Abbess's portrait had inspired, were thus banished; and, still gazing on Aurelia, I encouraged myself to the commission of deliberate and premeditated crime. The old man was astonished at my conduct. He drawled out a long string of words, about drawing, tone, colouring, etc. etc.; but I heard him not. The thoughts of Aurelia, the hopes that I might yet fulfil some one of those many plans, which had only been delayed, absorbed me so completely, that I walked away, as in a dream, from the exhibition-room, without once asking for the painter—thus losing, perhaps, the best opportunity of learning what sort of connection there existed betwixt myself and these pictures, which seemed to comprehend in that magic circle the chief impressions of my whole life.

Once more, I was now resolved to venture all things for Aurelia. Nay, it seemed almost as if the clouds of mystery would soon be broken—as if, elevated to a station from which I could overlook all the characters and events connected with my life, I could have from them nothing to fear, and therefore nothing to risk. I brooded, as formerly, over a thousand plans and resolutions, in order to arrive nearer to my object. In the first place, I perceived that I should, no doubt, learn much from the strange painter, and, by conversation with him, develope many trains of evidence, of which the possession was to me most important. At last, I had nearly resolved that I would return, in my present state of complete disguise and metamorphosis, to the Baron's castle.

Nor, to my excited feelings and disordered imagination, did this appear as an act of extraordinary hazard and daring.

In the evening, I went, as usual, to the club-room, where I had trouble enough to restrain the vehemence of my emotions, and to prevent the ebullitions of my overheated phantasy from being observed. I heard much of the strange painter's productions, especially of that wonderful power of expression which he had displayed in his portraits, above all in that of Aurelia. I had now the means of joining in this approbation, and, with a peculiar splendour, and strength of language, (heightened, too, by a kind of scorn and irony, for I felt my own superiority in speaking of this picture,) I described the nameless graces, the angelic charms, which were spread over that saint-like countenance. Hereupon, one of the party declared his intention of bringing the painter himself to the club on the following evening, adding, that, though advanced in years, he was still an interesting and agreeable companion, and that he would be detained here for some time longer, having been employed professionally by several rich families in the town.

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Agitated by a tempest of conflicting feelings and indefinable apprehensions, I could scarcely summon up resolution for the encounter which I had so much wished, and, on the following night, went at a later hour than usual to the club-room.

On my entrance, I perceived at once which was the stranger, though his countenance was not turned towards me. A conviction of the truth immediately flashed on my mind; and, when I went round, and took my place opposite to him—then, oh Heaven! there glared out upon me the never-to-be-forgotten features of that horrible Unknown, the same who, on St Anthony's day, had leaned against the pillar of the church, and filled me with abhorrence and consternation!

Now, too, even as then, he looked at me with the same fixed solemnity of aspect—the same cold spectral self-possession. But the mood of mind which I had so recently been cherishing, the thoughts of Aurelia, and my determination to brave all things for her sake, gave me courage and stability to bear up against his inspection, apparently unmoved. I could no longer suppose that I but dreamed. The enemy had now visibly started into life; and I was necessitated to venture the combat.

I resolved, however, not to begin, but wait for his attack; and, should he attempt to tear off the mask by which I was now concealed, to beat him back with weapons, on the strength of which I flattered myself that I could rely.

After a short interval, however, the stranger appeared to take no particular notice of me, but, turning his looks another way, continued the conversation in which he had been engaged at my entrance. The party began, at length, to speak of his own works, and bestowed especial praise on the portrait of Aurelia. Some one among them maintained, that, although this picture was, even at first sight, evidently a portrait, yet it might serve for an imaginative study, and be taken for the *beau* (or *belle*) *ideal* of a female saint. As I had, on

the preceding evening, been so eloquent in praise of this work, they now asked my opinion, and, almost unconsciously, I said that I coincided with the last speaker, and that I could not imagine to myself the blessed St Rosalia otherwise than as a counterpart of the female here represented.

The painter seemed scarcely to notice my words, but again broke in —"Indeed, that young lady, whom the portrait, whatever may be its merit as a work of art, very faithfully resembles, is a real and immaculate saint—who, in the spiritual combat, exalts herself even to supernatural excellence. I have painted her at the moment when, under the influence of the most overwhelming griefs, she yet placed her hope and trust in religious consolation,—in the aid of that Divine Providence which unceasingly watches over us.

"The expression of this hope, which, in a perfect degree, can dwell only in a mind elevated above all that is terrestrial, I have endeavoured to give to my picture—I cannot flatter myself that I have adequately succeeded, but the principle, '*in magnis voluisse*,' seems to me to have rendered it at least one of the most tolerable of my productions."

The conversation now wandered away to other subjects.—The wine, which to-day, in honour of the stranger-guest, was of a better sort, and drunk more freely than usual, soon did its good office in enlivening the party—Every one of them at last found something diverting to relate, or some comical song to sing. The painter, meanwhile, seemed only to laugh inwardly. If any change was produced in his countenance, it was to be observed in his eyes, which were lighted up occasionally with a certain mysterious lustre,—yet, by means of a few striking and powerful words occasionally thrown in, he was able to play his part, and to keep the whole company in admirable good humour.

Although, whenever the stranger happened to fix his looks on me, I could not repress a certain feeling of apprehension, yet I gradually overcame that still worse mood of mind into which I had been brought, on my first *reconnoissance* of his features. I even told stories of the absurd Belcampo, who was known less or more to all the party, and, to their great amusement, gave such a lively account of his behaviour on the day of my arrival, (with imitations of his voice and gesticulations,) that a good-humoured fat merchant who sat opposite to me, declared, with tears of laughter in his eyes, "That was the most delightful evening he had ever spent in his life!"

When the merriment that I had raised had begun to decline away, the stranger suddenly inquired—"Gentlemen, has any one among you ever seen the Devil?"

This question was received but as the prelude to some new and comical story. Of course, every one assured him, in turn, "that he had never yet had that honour."

"Well," said the stranger, "it so happened, that I was very lately within a hair-breadth of attaining myself to that honour, and this, namely, at the Castle of the Baron von R—, among the Thuringian mountains."

I now trembled in every limb; but the others laughed aloud, crying out, "Go on—go on!"

"Gentlemen," said the painter, "you probably all know that wild district in the Thuringian mountains, through which every one must pass, who travels in that direction northwards. But there is especially, on a by-road, one romantic spot, where, if the traveller emerges out of the dark pine-tree forests, and advances to the height of the rocky cliffs, he finds himself suddenly, to his amazement, on the extreme verge of an awful, deep, and, indeed, bottomless abyss. This is called the devil's ground, and the projecting promontory of the rock the devil's chair.

"Of the devil's chair it is related, that once, when a certain Count Victorin, with his head full of wicked projects, had sat down upon this rock, the devil suddenly appeared beside him; and because he was himself resolved to carry the Count's wicked designs into execution, he incontinently hurled Victorin down into the unfathomable gulf.

"Thereafter, the devil appeared as a capuchin monk, at the castle of the Baron von R—; and when he had taken his pleasure with the Baroness, he first sent her out of the world, (no one knew how,) and then, because the Baron's son, a madman, would by no means allow of this masquerade, but always called out, 'The devil, the devil is among us!' he strangled him. However, by that persevering *annonce* of the madman, *one* pious soul at least was saved from the destruction which the devil had intended for them all; and this was the young Baroness Aurelia, the subject of the picture, which you have this night been commending.

"Afterwards, the capuchin, (or the devil,) in an inconceivable manner, vanished; and it is said, that he fled, coward-like, from Victorin, who had risen like a bloody spectre from the grave against him.

"Let all this be as it may, I can assure you, in plain truth, that the Baroness died mysteriously—probably by poison; and that Hermogen (the madman) was assassinated. The Baron himself, shortly afterwards, died of grief; and Aurelia, the pious Saint, whose portrait I painted, at the very time when these horrible events had taken place at the castle, fled as a desolate orphan into a distant Cistertian Convent, of which the Abbess had been in terms of friendship with her father.

"You have seen and admired in my gallery the likeness of this admirable and unfortunate young lady. But as to other circumstances, this gentleman (pointing to me) will be better able to inform you than I am, since, during the whole of the adventures to which I have alluded, he was an inhabitant of the castle!"

All looks, full of astonishment, were now directed towards me. Quite unnerved, and lost to all self-possession, I started up—"How, sir!" exclaimed I, in a violent tone—"What have I to do with your absurd stories of capuchins, and devils, and assassinations? You mistake me—you mistake me completely, I assure you; and I must beg that, for this once, you will leave me

completely out of the question."

Considering the tumult of my mind, it was difficult for me to give my words even this much of connection and propriety, or to assume any degree of composure. The powerful influence of the painter's narrative, and my excessive disquietude, were only too visible. The cheerful tone which prevailed through the party rapidly declined; and as the members of the club gradually recollected that I was a complete stranger, and had only by accident obtained my place among them, they began to fix on me mistrustful and suspicious glances.

Meanwhile, the painter had risen from his chair, and, standing opposite, transfixed me once more with his dead-alive glaring eyes, as formerly in the Capuchin church. He did not utter a word; he stood cold, stiff, and, but for the expression of his eyes, as if lifeless.

But at those ghostly looks, my hair rose on end; cold drops gathered on my forehead, and, seized by the most intense horror, I trembled through every fibre. "Avaunt!—away with thee!" I exclaimed, out of myself with agitation; "for thou thyself art Satan! Thou art the murderer—yet over me thou hast no power!"

The whole party instantly left their seats.—"What's the matter? Who is that?" was heard from all quarters; and out of the adjoining *salle*, the people, terrified by my voice, having left their amusements, came thronging into our room.—"A drunk man!—A madman!—Turn him out!" cried several voices.

Meanwhile, the painter stood there steadfast, and immovably staring upon me. The power which he thus (I know not how) exerted over my very mind and thoughts—the whole train of consequences which the discovery he was determined to force out would bring upon me—the wretched thraldom in which I should remain at present, and the destruction which must ensue—all these ideas conflicted together in my mind. But even without their aid, the looks of the spectral painter alone were more than I could endure. Methought his detestable features at length enlarged, moved, and were writhen in mockery and scorn. At last, driven to the uttermost paroxysm of rage and despair, I drew forth the stiletto with which I had, in self-defence, killed Hermogen, and which I always carried in my breast-pocket.

With this weapon in my hand, I now fell upon my enemy; but his quick eye had caught every movement, and one blow of his powerful arm brought me to the ground. Methought I heard him laugh aloud, in hideous and scornful triumph, so that his voice resounded through the chamber.

"Brother Medardus!" said he, "Brother Medardus, play no longer this false game! Go, return to the sanctuary of thy convent, and humble thyself to the dust in shame and repentance!"

I now felt myself seized by the people in the room; and allowing them to raise me up, pretended at first to be quite exhausted; then, all at once, rousing my whole strength, I drove and struck like a raging wild beast against my assailants; and this so unexpectedly, that several of them fell to the ground,

and I made myself a passage towards the door; but had scarcely rushed into the corridor, when a small side door opened, and I felt myself seized on by an invisible arm, by which I was drawn into a dark chamber. To this I made no resistance, for the multitude of pursuers were raging behind me.

Into this dark room I had been drawn just as I turned round a corner of the corridor, and the mob of people, imagining that I had run onwards and escaped down stairs, passed by the door and left me for the moment unmolested. My invisible companion listened to their proceedings, and in a few moments led me by the arm down a dark, private staircase, into a back court, and then through the buildings behind into the open street. By the light of the lamps I here recognised as my deliverer the absurd Belcampo!

Chapter XX

*

"Your excellency," said Belcampo, "appears to have laboured under a strange fatality with regard to this painter. I was drinking my wine in an adjoining room when the uproar began, and resolved, if possible, to rescue you, for I alone am the author of all this disturbance."

"How can that be?" said I; "what share could you possibly have in the disaster?"

"Who can resist momentary impulse?" said the little man, in a tone of great pathos; "who can withstand the influences of that unseen, but predominant Spirit, that rules over and inspires all our thoughts and actions?

"When I arranged your excellency's hair, my mind was, as usual, lighted up by the sublimest ideas. I resigned myself up to the unbridled impulse of wild phantasy, and accordingly I not only forgot to bring the lock of anger on the topmost curls into a state of proper softness and roundness, but even left seven-and-twenty hairs of fear and horror upon the forehead.

"The twenty-seven hairs that were thus left, raised themselves erect at the stern looks of the painter, (who is, in truth, neither more nor less than a *revenant*,) and inclined themselves longingly towards the lock of anger on the toupée, which, in return, hissing and rustling, became dishevelled. All this I could perceive with my own eyes.

"Then, roused to extreme rage, your excellency pulled out a stiletto, on which I distinguished that there were already drops of blood. But it was a vain and needless attempt to send to hell him who to hell already belongs. For this painter is Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, or Bertram de Bornis, or Mephistopheles, or Benvenuto Cellini, or Judas Iscariot; in short, a wicked *revenant*, and, in my opinion, to be banished by no other means than by burning-hot curling-irons, which shall twist away into annihilation that idea in which he properly consists; or, by the dexterous and energetic use of electrical combs, against those thoughts which, in order to his own existence, he must suck up and imbibe.

"Your excellency perceives that to me, *phantast* and artist by profession, such things are, as the French say, *veritable pomade*, which proverb, borrowed from our science, has more meaning than one would otherwise suppose, as soon as the pomade is known to contain genuine oil of cloves."

This mad and unintelligible gibberish of the little man, who, meanwhile, ran along with me through the streets, had for me, in my present mood of mind, something truly horrible; and yet, when I looked now and then at his

incredible leaps and springs, his grotesque gestures, and comical countenances, I was forced, as if by an involuntary convulsion, to laugh.

At last we were in my own chamber, in the inn of the suburb, and beyond the town gates. Here Belcampo assisted me to pack up my clothes, etc. and in a short time all was ready for my departure. Thereafter, I slipped not one only, but several ducats, into his hand, whereupon he jumped up into the air for joy, and cried aloud, "Hurrah!—hurrah!—now I have got gold, indeed—honourable gold, dyed in heart's-blood, streaming and beaming with its red effulgence! Excuse me, sir," (for at these words I looked at him with amazement,) "'twas but a passing thought, and now 'tis gone!"

He then offered his services to give to the "lock of anger" the proper degree of roundness, and cut away the "twenty-seven hairs of horror," requesting also that he might be allowed to choose for himself a small "love-lock," to keep as a remembrance. This I accordingly granted, and with indescribable gestures and grimaces, he fulfilled his task.

After this, he seized the stiletto, which, on undressing, I had laid upon the table, and taking the position of a fencer, made with it divers cuts and thrusts into the air.

"Ha!" said he, "now shall I make an end of your adversary, for he is but an idea, probably he may also be extirpated by a thought. Let him die, then, by this thought of mine, which, in order to render more powerful, I accompany with suitable gestures of the body—*Apage, Satanas!—apage, Ahasuerus!—Allez vous en!*—Now, that was something like! That was working to some purpose," said he, laying down the stiletto, breathing hard, and wiping his brows, like one that has exerted his utmost to get through some great labour.

Luckily I now got possession of the stiletto, and, wishing to conceal it, groped with it into my sleeve, forgetting that I no longer wore my capuchin robes. This gesture the man seemed to remark, and slyly to laugh at. Meanwhile the postilion (for I had ordered horses) began to blow his bugle before the house.

Then Belcampo suddenly changed his posture and tone. He drew out a small pocket-handkerchief, bent himself several times with deep reverence, at last kneeled before me, and entreated in a lamentable voice—

"Two masses, reverend father, I beseech you, for my poor grandmother, who died of a surfeit; four for my father, who died of involuntary fasting; but for myself, one every week when I am dead. Above all, however, and in the first place, an indulgence for my many faults and sins now, while I am yet living!

"Alas! sir, there is an infamous wicked fellow that lurks concealed within me, and says, 'Peter Fairfield, be no longer an ass, and believe that thou existest; for *I* am properly *thou*, and am called Belcampo—moreover am a genial idea; and if thou dost not believe this, I will strike thee down to the earth with an acute thought, finely pointed as a hair!'

"This damnable fellow, sir, commits all sorts of sins and wicked pranks. Oftentimes he doubts of the Real Presence—gets drunk—falls into quarrels and pommelling matches, and commits gross indelicacies against pure virgin thoughts. This Pietro Belcampo, sir, has made me, Peter Fairfield, quite confused and dissipated; so that I frequently jump about in an absurd and unbecoming manner, and defile the spotless garb of innocence, when, with white silk stockings, and singing *dulce jubilo*, I splash unawares into the dirt. Forgiveness, then, venerable father, for both, for Peter Fairfield and Pietro Belcampo."

He continued prostrate, and pretended to sob violently. The folly of the man became tiresome to me. "Be reasonable at least," said I to him, "and give us no more of this." The head-waiter now came in to take my luggage. Belcampo sprung up, and resuming at once his mirthful humour, he assisted, talking, however, all the time, to collect together whatever property of mine was in the room. In a few moments I found myself seated in my cabriolet.

"That fellow is a most complete puppy," said the waiter, in a low voice, and pointing to Belcampo; "the less one has to do with him the better."

The door was closed, and the postilion mounted. Belcampo waved his hat, and began, "Even to the last breath of my life—" but with a significant look, I laid my finger on my lips, and he was silent. Anon the postilion drove off, blowing the *Tyroler-lied* on his bugle as we clattered along the *chaussée*, and I was once more, emancipated from all ties, whether hostile or friendly, thrown upon the world.

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When the morning began to dawn, the town from which I had fled lay far behind me; and as I contemplated with some interest the new scenes through which we passed, the form of that frightful man, who pursued and haunted me like a visible impersonization of the guilt and mystery by which my life had been darkened, had again almost vanished away. On setting out, I had merely desired to be driven to the first stage on the high road leading southwards; but at every new station, the questions of the postmaster, "*Whence and whither?*" revived to my mind how completely I was now separated and cut off from every relationship in life; and like the wandering Ahasuerus, of whom Belcampo had spoken, was utterly given up, a prey to the stormy waves of chance, that bore me like a powerless wreck along.

But had not my ruling destiny drawn me thus out of my former relationships and dependencies, only that the internal efforts of my spirit might be exerted with greater life and vigour? Something must be accomplished, in order to still those yearnings of the soul, by which I was convinced that a great and important result was before me. Restless I travelled on, through a beautiful and flourishing country. Nowhere could I find repose, but was driven irresistibly onward, always farther and farther, towards the south. I had hitherto, without any consciousness or attention on my own part, scarcely made any important deviation from the route recommended to me by Leonardus; so that the impulse which he had given to me at first setting out,

seemed to work always in a straight-forward direction, and with an influence wholly uninterrupted.

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It happened, one very dark night, that I travelled through a dense wood of pine and beech-trees, which was said to extend as far as the next station, on which account the postmaster had advised me to remain with him till the next morning; but from an impatience, to myself unaccountable, as I was unable to put a name on any goal or object which I wished to reach, I peremptorily refused his proposal.

Already, at the time of my departure, lightning, which is not usual at that season of the year, gleamed on the distant horizon; and very soon, clouds, collected by the approaching storm, rolled together, darker and darker, in threatening volumes. The postilion observed what sort of weather we should of necessity encounter; pointed to the clouds, and asked if he might return? To this I gave a peremptory answer in the negative. We entered accordingly that long, interminable, and tangled forest which stretches between Holzenheim and Rosenthurm, where the wood alternately consists of tall beech-trees and dense thickets of Norway and Scotch fir. Having laid aside his tobacco-pipe, he began here, for his diversion, to play "Malbrook" on his bugle; but anon the thunder began to roll, and even to crack above our heads, with numberless reverberations; while, far as the eye could reach, there was nothing but the crossing and re-crossing of red lightnings on the horizon. Such a tempest I have never witnessed, neither before nor since. During a thunderstorm, the air is generally calm, but now there were unaccountable gusts of wind, such as usually occur only in the depth of winter. The tall fir-trees, shaken to their very roots, groaned and crashed. The rain poured down in torrents. Every moment we ran the risk of being killed by the falling of the trees, and the horses constantly reared, and ran back from the flashes of lightning.

At last, after a long struggle, and many vicissitudes, we were "beat to a *stand still*," for the carriage (as a climax) was overturned, on a piece of rough road, so violently, that one of the hinder wheels broke in pieces. Thus we had no alternative, but must remain on the spot, till the storm should abate, and the moon break through the clouds.

The postilion now remarked, that, on account of the darkness, and the rain driving in his face, he had quite wandered away from the right road, and had fallen into an avenue of the forest. There was now no other method, but to follow out this avenue as far as it would go, and thus perhaps to arrive at some woodman's hut or village.

Though the darkness continued, yet we contrived to prop up the carriage with a kind of wooden leg, and thus it was dragged gradually onwards. We had not gone far, till, marching in the van, I perceived now and then the gleaming of a light, and thought that I could distinguish the baying of dogs.

I had not deceived myself; for we had not persevered in our laborious progress above a few minutes longer, before I distinctly heard the dogs'

voices; and in due time we came to an opening in the wood, where the road became more passable. At last we arrived at a large respectable-looking house, though, as far as the dim light enabled us to perceive, old, gloomy, and surrounded by the high walls of a regularly-built square court.

The postilion, without hesitation, knocked loudly at the outer gate. The dogs immediately grew outrageous, and sprang out from their kennels against us. In the house, (or *keep*,) however, all remained quiet and dead, till the postilion had recourse to his horn, (lending me a spare one, that we might play a duet,) and blew "Wilhelmus von Nassau" with such vehemence, that the old vaulted building re-echoed to the notes.

Then a window in the upper story, from which I had before seen the light, was opened, and a deep, rough voice called out, "Christian! Christian!"—"Ay, ay, sir," cried a voice from below. Then we knocked again, and blew our horns.

"There is a knocking and blowing of bugles at our gate," said the voice from above, "and the dogs are raging like devils. Take the lantern down, with the blunderbuss number three, and see what is the matter."—Soon after, we heard Christian's voice, quieting the dogs, and saw him at last come with the lantern.

Chapter XXI

*

The postilion now found out where we were. Instead of going straight forward, he had quitted the road, and driven almost in a retrograde direction, so that we were now at the Prince von Rosenthurm's *forst-haus*, distant only about a league to the right of the station which we had quitted.

As soon as we had explained to Christian the mischance that we had met with, he directly opened both wings of the gate, and let the carriage pass into the court. The dogs, who were now pacified, came fawning and snuffling about us; and the man above, who was still stationed at the window, cried out incessantly, in a voice by no means of good-humour, "Who's there?—who's there? *What for a* caravan is that?" to which neither Christian nor I returned a word in answer.

At last I stepped into the house, and was walking up stairs, when I met a powerful tall man, with a sun-burnt visage, a large hat, with a plume of green feathers, on his head, (which was oddly contrasted with the rest of his figure, for he appeared in his shirt and slippers,) and a drawn stiletto (or hunting dagger) in his hand. In a rough voice, he called out to me, "Whence do you come? How dare you disturb people in the dead of night? This is no public-house; no post station. Here no one lives but the *Ober-revier-forster*, and for want of a better, I am he. Christian is an ass, for having opened the gates without my permission."

In a tone of great humility, I now related the story of my mischance, explaining that nothing but necessity had brought me hither. Hereupon the man was somewhat conciliated. He said, "Well, no doubt, the storm was very violent; but your postilion must be a stupid rascal, to drive out of the road, and break your carriage in that manner. Such a fellow should have been able to go blindfolded through these woods. He should be at home among them, like any one of us."

With these words, he led me up stairs into a large hall, furnished with a long oak table and benches; the walls adorned with stag's antlers, hunting weapons, bugle-horns, etc. An enormous stove was at one end, and an open *kamin*, where there were yet the warm embers of a wood-fire, at the other.

The *Ober-revier-forster* now laid aside his hat and dagger, and drawing on his clothes, requested I would not take it ill that he had received me so roughly; for, in his remote habitation, he must be constantly on his guard. All sorts of bad people were in the habit of haunting these woods—and especially with poachers, he lived almost always in open warfare—"However," added he, "the rogues can gain no advantage over me, for, with the help of God, I fulfil my duty to the prince conscientiously and faithfully. They have more than

once attacked my house by night; but, in reliance on Providence, and my trusty dogs and fire-arms, I bid them defiance."

Involuntarily, and led away by the force of old habits, I here thrust in some common-place words about the power and efficacy of trust in God.—However, such expressions were not lost on the forester, but seemed to gain for me his confidence and good opinion. He became always more cheerful, and notwithstanding my earnest entreaties to the contrary, roused up his wife—a matron in years, of a quiet, good-humoured demeanour, who, though thus disturbed from her sleep, welcomed, in a very friendly manner, her unexpected guest, and began, by her husband's orders, to prepare supper.

As for the postilion, he, by the forester's decision, was obliged, for a punishment, that night, to drive back (as he best could) to the station from which he had come,—and on the following morning I should be carried on by the forester to the place of my destination. I agreed the more readily to this plan, as I found myself now much in want of repose.

I therefore said to my host that I would gladly stay with him even till the middle of the following day, as, by constant travelling, I had been greatly fatigued, and would be much the better for such refreshment.

"If I might advise you, sir," said the forester, "you had better remain here through the whole of to-morrow—After that, my son, whom I must at any rate send to the *residenz*, will himself take you forward in my carriage."

I was, of course, well contented with this proposal; and by way of conversation, while supper was placed on the table, began to praise the solitude and retirement of his house, by which I professed myself to be greatly attracted.

"It is remote, sir, no doubt," said the forester; "at the same time, our life here is the farthest possible from being dull or gloomy, as a townsman would probably conclude it to be.—To such people every situation in the country appears both lonely and stupid;—but much depends on the temper and disposition of the party by whom a house like this of ours is inhabited.

"If, as in former years in this castle, an old gloomy Baron were the master,—one who shuts himself up within the four walls of his court, and takes no pleasure in the woods or the chase—then, indeed, it would be a dull and lonely habitation—But since this old Baron died, and our gracious Prince has been pleased to fit it up as a *forst-haus*, it has been kept in constant liveliness and mirth.

"Probably you, sir, may be one of those townspeople, who know nothing, unless by report, of our pleasures, and therefore can have no adequate idea, what a joyous pleasant life we hunters lead in the forest—As to solitude, I know nothing either of its pains or pleasures—for, along with my huntsmen lads, we live all equally, and make but one family. Indeed, however absurd this may seem to you, I reckon my staunch wise dogs also among the number—And why not? They understand every word that I say to them. They obey even my slightest signals, and are attached, and faithful even to death.

"Mark there, only, how intelligently my Waldmann looks up, because he knows already that I am speaking about him!

"Now, sir, not only is there every day something to be done with the huntsmen and dogs in the forest—but every evening before, there is the pleasure of preparation, and a hospitable well-supplied board, (at which we enjoy ourselves with a zest, that you townsmen never experience;) then, with the first dawn of day, I am always out of bed, and make my appearance, blowing all the way a cheering *réveille* upon my hunting-horn.

"At that sound every one directly starts up—The dogs, too, begin to give tongue, and join in one great concert, of barking and rejoicing, from their delight at the anticipation of the coming sport. The huntsmen are quickly dressed—They throw the game-bags and fire-arms on their shoulders, and assemble directly in this room, where my old woman (my wife, I mean) prepares for us a right stout hunter's breakfast, an enormous *schüssel* of hot ragout, with a bottle of vin-ordinaire, a reaming flagon of home-brewed ale, with another of *Stettiner beer*, sent us from the *residenz*; then, after a glass of *schnaps*, we all sally forth in the highest possible spirits, shouting and rejoicing.

"Thereafter, we have a long march before us—(I speak of our employments at this present season)—but at last we arrive at the spot where the game lies in cover—There every one takes his stand apart from the rest; the dogs grope about with their noses on the ground, snuffing the scent, and looking back every now and then to give notice to the huntsman, who, in his turn, stands with his gun cocked, motionless and scarcely daring to breathe, as if rooted to the ground. But when at last the game starts out of the thicket, when the guns crack, and the dogs rush in after the shot, ah! then, sir, one's heart beats—every fibre is trembling with youthful energy; old as I am, I thus feel transformed into a new man.

"Moreover, and above all, there are no two adventures of this kind exactly like each other. In every one is something new, and there is always something to talk over that never happened before. If it were no more than the variety of game at different seasons of the year, this alone renders the pursuit so delightful, that one never can have enough of it.

"But setting aside these diversions, I assure you, sir, that the mere superintendance and care of the woods is an employment which would amply fill up my time from January to December. So far am I from feeling lonely, that every tree of the forest is to me like a companion.

"Absolutely, it appears to me as if every plant which has grown up under my inspection, and stretches up its glossy waving head into the air, should know me and love me, because I have watched over, and protected it. Nay, many times, when I hear the whispering and rushing of the leaves in the wind, it seems as if the trees themselves spoke with an intelligible voice, that this was indeed a true praising of God and his omnipotence; a prayer, which, in no articulate words, could so well have been expressed.

"In short, sir, an honest huntsman and forester, who has the fear of God before him, leads, even in these degenerate times, an admirable and happy life. Something is yet left to him of that fine old state of liberty, when the habits of men were according to nature, and they knew nothing of all that conventional artifice, parade, and frippery, wherewith they are now tormented in their walled-up garrisons and cities. *There*, indeed, they become totally estranged from all those delightful influences which God, in the midst of his works in this world, is ready to shower upon them, by which, on the contrary, they ought to be edified and rejoiced, as the free sylvan people were in former ages, who lived in love and friendship with nature, as we read in the old histories."

All this (though his style was somewhat rambling and methodistic) the old forester uttered with a *gusto* and emphasis, by which one could not fail to perceive that he felt whatever he had said deeply in his own heart; and I truly envied him his station in life, together with his deeply-grounded quiet moods of mind, to which my own bore so little resemblance, or rather presented so painful a contrast.

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In another part of the building, which was of considerable extent, the old man shewed me a small and neatly-fitted-up apartment, in which was a bed, and where I found my luggage already deposited. There he left me, with the assurance that the early disturbance in the house would not break my sleep, as I was quite separated from the other inhabitants of the castle, and might rest as long as I chose. My breakfast would not be carried in until I rung the bell, or came down stairs to order it. He added, that I should not see him again till we met at the dinner-table, as he should set out early with his lads to the forest, and would not return before mid-day.

I gave myself no farther trouble therefore, but being much fatigued, undressed hastily, and threw myself into bed, where I soon fell into a deep sleep. After this, however, I was persecuted by a horrible dream. In a manner the most extraordinary, it began with the consciousness of slumber. I said to myself, "Now this is fortunate, that I have fallen asleep so readily; I shall by this means quite recover from my fatigue, and, for fear of awaking, must only take special care to keep my eyes shut."

Notwithstanding this resolution, it seemed to me as if I must, of necessity, open my eyes, and yet continued at the same time to sleep. Then the door of my room opened, and a dark form entered, in whom, to my extreme horror and amazement, I recognised *myself* in the capuchin habit, with the beard and tonsure!

The monk came nearer and nearer to the bed, till he stood leaning over me, and grinned scornfully. "Now, then," said he, in a hollow sepulchral voice, and yet with a strange cadence of exultation—"now, then, thou shalt come along with me; we shall mount on the *altan[5]* on the roof of the house beside the weather-cock, who will sing us a merry bridal-song, because the owl to-night holds his wedding-feast—there shall we contend together, and whoever

beats the other from the roof of the house is king, and may drink blood!"

I felt now that the figure seized upon me, and tried to lift me up from the bed. Then despair gave me courage, and I exclaimed, "Thou art not Medardus!—thou art the devil!" and as if with the claws of a demon, I grappled at the throat and visage of this detestable spectre.

But when I did so, it seemed as if my fingers forced their way into empty skeleton sockets, or held only dry withered joints, and the spectre laughed aloud in shrilling tones of scorn and mockery.

At that moment, as if forcibly roused by some one violently wrenching me about, I awoke!

The laughter still continued in the room. I raised myself up. The morning had broken in bright gleams through the window, and I actually beheld at the table, with his back turned towards me, a figure dressed in the capuchin habit!

I was petrified with horror. The abominable dream had started into real life! The capuchin tossed and tumbled among the things which lay upon the table, till by accident he turned round, and thereupon I recovered all my courage, for his visage, thank Heaven, was *not mine*! Certain features, indeed, bore the closest resemblance, but I was in health and vigour; he was, on the contrary, worn and emaciated, disguised too by an overgrown head of hair, and grizzly black beard. Moreover, his eyes rolled and glared with the workings of a thoughtless and vacant delirium.

I resolved not to give any alarm, but remain quietly on the watch for whatever he might do, and not interrupt him unless he attempted something formidably mischievous, for my stiletto lay near me on the bed, and on that account, together with my superior strength, I could soon be completely master of this intruder.

He appeared to look at, and to play with, the things that lay upon the table, as a child would do with toys; especially, he seemed delighted with the red *portefeuille*, which he turned over and over towards the light of the window, at the same time making strange grimaces, and jumping up like a patient in the dance of St Vitus.

At last, he found the bottle with the rest of the Devil's Elixir, which he directly opened and smelt at; then he seemed to tremble convulsively through every limb. He uttered a loud and indescribable cry—"He, he, he!—He, he, he!" which echoed in faltering reverberations through the room, and passages.

A clear-toned clock in the house just then struck three (but the hour must have been much later.) Thereupon, to my great annoyance, he lifted up his voice, and howled as if seized by some horrible torment; then broke out once more into the same shrill laughter that I had heard in my dream. He heaved himself about into the wildest attitudes and caprioles, concluding with a long draught from the bottle with the Devil's Elixir, which (after having exhausted the last drops) he then hurled from him against the wall, and ran out at the door.

I now instantly rose up and looked after him, but he was already out of sight, and I heard him clamping and clattering down a distant staircase; and, lastly, the violent hollow clank of a door, as he closed it after him.

I then carefully locked and bolted that of my own room, that I might be secured against any second intrusion, and threw myself once more into bed. I had been too much excited to be able for some time to sleep again; but at last slumber fell heavily upon me, and I did not awake till a late hour, when, refreshed and strengthened, I found the bright warm sun beating into my apartment.

Chapter XXII

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Having dressed, I found a bell in the corridor, which I rung, to give notice that I was awake. The forester, according to what he had said, had gone out early with his huntsmen; but a very blooming, and indeed beautiful girl, his youngest daughter, appeared, and served me with breakfast, while her elder sister, as she told me, was busied with her mother in household concerns.

The girl was frank and unembarrassed. She described to me, very prettily, how the inhabitants of the *forst-haus* all lived on the best terms together, and that only now and then, their usual quiet routine was interrupted when the Prince came to hunt in this district, who on such occasions frequently staid through the night with the forester.

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Thus a few hours glided away. Then it was mid-day, and the mirthful sounds of shouting and bugle-horns announced that the forester was on his return. He appeared soon after, attended by his four sons, (of whom the youngest was about fifteen,) all blooming, handsome young men, and three servants. They were all dressed uniformly, in dark green and gold, with complete accoutrements for the *chasse*.

The forester directly inquired how I had rested in the night, and if the early alarm in the court had not awoke me. I did not like to relate to him the adventure which had befallen me; for the living appearance of the horrible monk had joined itself so closely to the phantom of my dream, that I could scarcely distinguish that point at which the vision had passed onwards into reality.

The long oak table was spread. Two large dishes smoked at head and foot;—the old man took off his cap in order to say grace. Then the door suddenly burst open, and the emaciated, grizzly capuchin, habited precisely as I had seen him in the night, marched in. The wildness of insanity had indeed somewhat relaxed upon his visage; but he still looked gloomy, discontented, and scowled around him.

"Welcome, reverend sir," cried the forester. "You are come in good time. Do you say grace for me, and then take your place with us at the dinner-table."

Hereupon the monk's eyes kindled with furious rage;—he looked wildly on every one; and, in a frightful tone, cried out, "May the devil fetch you, with your reverend sirs, and your damned hypocritical graces! Have you enticed me hither, in order that I might be the *thirteenth*, and that you might allow me to be butchered by the strange murderer? Have you stuck me into this tunic,

that no one might recognise the Count, who is thy lord and master? But beware, thou miscreant!—beware of my just anger!"

With these words, the monk seized a heavy earthen bottle, which stood upon the table, and hurled it at the old man, who, only by his professional quickness of eye, and a very clever turn of his head, escaped the blow, which otherwise must have been his instant destruction.

At that moment, the three servants started up, seized the madman, and pinioned his arms.

"What!" cried the forester, "thou cursed, blasphemous wretch, is it thus that, with thy old bedlamite pranks, thou venturest to come into the society of honest Christians? Thou venturest again to aim against my life—against me, by whom thou wert raised from the condition of the beasts of the field, and from the certainty of everlasting perdition?—Away—away with thee to prison!"

The monk now fell upon his knees. He prayed—even wept—moaned, and howled for mercy. But in vain. "Thou must and shalt go to prison," said the forester; "and never shalt thou dare to come hither again, until such time as I know that thou hast renounced the Satan that thus blinds thee; and if not, thou shalt die!"

Hereupon the maniac shrieked out in the hopeless agony of grief. He was seized, however, and led away by the huntsmen, who, returning soon afterwards, announced to us, that he had become quieter as soon as he was deposited in his dungeon. They added, that Christian, who generally watched over him, had said, that the monk, through the whole preceding night, had been restless, and tumbling about through the walks and corridors of the castle; and that, more especially towards the morning, he had been heard often to exclaim—"More wine, and I will give myself up wholly to thee!—More wine—more wine!" Besides, it had seemed to Christian as if the man absolutely rolled about like a drunken person, though it was impossible for him to conceive how he could have got at any kind of intoxicating liquor.

Now, therefore, I of course did not any longer hesitate to relate my adventures of the night; nor did I forget the circumstance of his drinking out of my basket-bottle.

"Ha, worthy sir," said the forester, "I owe you indeed many apologies. You must have been cruelly disturbed. But you seem a pious good man, and therefore courageous. Another might have absolutely died of terror."

I begged him to tell me, somewhat minutely, what was the real history of his connection with the monk. "At another opportunity, sir, if you please," said the forester; "it is too long a narrative to begin during dinner; and indeed it is bad enough that this abominable man has disturbed us in such manner just as we were about to enjoy, gratefully and tranquilly, that which the goodness of God bestows upon us. However, let us lose no farther time."

Thereupon he took off his hat, and said the grace, with much emphasis and devotion. The conversation became animated and cheerful, as if nothing had happened;—the dishes, though served in a rustic style, were plentiful, and admirably cooked; so that I had never partaken of a more refreshing and agreeable repast. There were excellent strong soup, and boiled meat; afterwards, a course of venison and other game, prepared in different ways, (of which I preferred the *sour braten*,) salmon, etc. In honour of his guest, the old man produced some bottles of noble old wine, which was drunk, according to patriarchal custom, out of a magnificent goblet, and passed round the table.

While the wine thus went round, the dishes were cleared away. The huntsmen then took their bugle-horns from the wall, and, by way of concert, blew a loud, inspiring *jager-lied*;[6] first without accompaniment, but, at the second repetition, they blew more softly, and the girls joined in with very sweet voices. Then, at the third and concluding part, the forester's four sons also joined, and finished the performance with a grand chorus.

My heart was in a wonderful degree lightened and expanded. For a long period, I had not felt myself in so genial a mood of mind as now, among these honest, simple-hearted people. There were afterwards many songs, very musically and effectively given, by the girls, assisted by the young men, till at last the forester rose up, and with the toast, "Long life to all brave men who love the noble art of hunting," he emptied his glass. We all followed his example; and thus the agreeable banquet, which, on my account, had been enlivened with wine and with song, was concluded.

"Now, sir," said the forester, "I shall sleep for half an hour, or thereabouts; but after that, we go once more to the wood; and if you are pleased to accompany us, I shall, on the way, relate to you how the monk came to my house, and all that I know of him. We must wait till the twilight, however. Then we go to our appointed station, where *Franz* has informed me, that there are a noble covey of partridges. You shall have a gun also, if it is agreeable to you, and try your fortune."

The thing was new to me; for though I had, as a *seminarist*, many times practised shooting at a mark, yet I had never tried at living game. I therefore accepted the forester's offer, who appeared quite delighted that I did so; and even before going to sleep, instructed me in various rules and precautions, by means of which he thought that I would make sure of booty.

Chapter XXIII

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Accordingly, I was in due time accoutred with a huntsman's bag, and a fowling-piece slung over my shoulder, and, in company with the old man, marched away through the woods, while, in the following manner, he began the story of the monk.

"This harvest, it must be now about six months since, my lads first announced that they heard oftentimes a tremendous howling in the forest, which, though the noise could not well be called human, yet my *Franz* always insisted it must be the voice of a man. Francis, indeed, seemed to be particularly aimed at, as the *butt* or prey of this howling spectre, for, when he went to a good station, the howling always frightened away the game; and, at last, whenever he wanted to shoot at a deer or hare, he saw a large bristly human monster burst out of the thicket, against whom he did not venture to draw the trigger.

"This youth had his head full of all the ghostly hunting legends which his father, an old *chasseur*, had related to him;—and he was inclined to hold that strange intruder for the devil himself, who wanted to destroy his sport, or entice him to destruction.

"The other lads,—even my own sons, to whom also the same devil had appeared,—at last joined with Francis, and my desire to obtain an explanation of all this mystery, was so much the greater, as I held it for a contrivance of the poachers, to frighten away my people from the proper covers.

"Consequently, I gave strict orders that the next time they met with the devil, they should stop and question him; and if he would not answer, they should, without hesitation, according to the rules of the forest, shoot him dead on the spot.

"Francis happened once more to be the first who encountered him.—Recollecting my orders, he commanded him to stand, at the same time presenting his fowling-piece—Thereupon the spectre rushed away into the thicket; Francis thought to send a thundering shot after him, but the gun missed fire; and now looking on this as supernatural, he ran homewards more horrified than ever. Of course, he told every adventure of this kind to his companions, who became all convinced that it was the devil who thus, frighted away the game, and frustrated his attempts in shooting—for it was quite true, that ever since he was persecuted by this demon, he had killed nothing, though, before that time, he had been an excellent and successful marksman.

"The rumour of the devil being in our wood spread itself abroad, and in the nearest village the people had got long stories, how Satan had come to

Francis, and offered him *freikügeln*, (enchanted balls,) with a deal of other absurd nonsense. I resolved, therefore, that I would myself make an end of all this, and watch at the places where he was usually found, for the monster, who had hitherto never once appeared to me.

"For a long time, my endeavours were unsuccessful, but at length, when I was at the station where he had first appeared to Francis, there was heard a rustling in the thickets—softly I raised up my gun, expecting a wild boar, or some other animal, but to my utter astonishment, there started up a horrible human figure, with flaming red eyes, bristly black hair, and his body hung (I cannot say clothed) with rags.—The spectre glared on me with his fiery eyes —uttering at the same time the tremendous howlings, which had been before now so faithfully described to me.

"In truth, sir, that was a moment which might have inspired terror even into the most courageous heart. I must confess I thought it was the devil who thus stood visibly before me,—and felt a cold sweat involuntarily burst from every pore—But in a powerful energetic prayer, which I uttered aloud, I completely recovered my courage. While I thus prayed, and pronounced audibly the name of Christ, the monster howled more outrageously than ever, and at last broke out into horrible blasphemies and execrations.

"Then I cried out—'Thou cursed, wicked, lubberly fellow, desist from these blasphemous words, and resign thyself into my power, otherwise I shall instantly shoot thee through the head!'

"Hereupon, with moans and lamentations, the man instantly fell upon the earth before me, and prayed for compassion. My servants came up—we seized the wretch, and led him home, where I shut him up in the prison of the tower, at the corner of the court, and next morning I intended to give notice of what had happened to the magistrates.

"As soon as he came into the tower, he had fallen into a state of almost utter insensibility.—When I went to him next morning, he was sitting on a bed of straw, which we had prepared for him, and wept violently. He fell at my feet, and begged that I would take compassion on him.—He told me that he had already lived several weeks in the woods, eating nothing but roots and wild fruit. He was a poor Capuchin from a distant convent, and had escaped out of the prison, in which, on account of his madness, he had been shut up.

"The man was, to say the truth, in a most miserable condition—I had compassion upon him, and desired that food and wine should be administered for his restoration, after which he visibly recovered. He begged of me in the most earnest and abject manner, that I would bear with him for a few days in the house, and that I would, if possible, get him a new dress of his order. He would then alone, and of his own accord, walk back to his convent.

"I complied with his wishes, and his madness seemed visibly to leave him. The paroxysms were more rare, and far less vehement. In the exasperations of his madness he uttered horrible cries, and I observed, that when on this account I spoke to him harshly, and threatened him with death, he fell into a state of almost utter annihilation, threw himself on the earth, chastised

himself with a knotted rope, and called on God and the Saints, to free him from the torments and terrors of hell which awaited him.

"At such intervals he seemed to look on himself as St Anthony, and at other times, in his violent paroxysms, affirmed that he was an *herrgraf*, and supreme Prince, adding, that he would have us all put to death as soon as his servants appeared to rescue him.

"In his lucid moments, he begged of me for God's sake not to turn him out of this house, as he felt that his cure depended on his residence with me. Only once I had another disagreeable adventure with him, and, as luck would have it, it befell just at the time when the Prince was hunting in our forest, and spent the night in my house.

"The monk, after he had beheld the Prince with his brilliant train of attendants, was completely changed. He remained gloomy and reserved. When we went as usual to prayers, he retired abruptly. If he heard even a word uttered in the spirit of devotion, there was a trembling through all his limbs, and at the same time, he looked on my daughter Anne with an aspect so strange and ambiguous, that I resolved to get him directly away from the house, in order to prevent all sorts of misdemeanours, which of necessity would ensue.

"In the course of the very night preceding the day on which I had intended to pack him off, I was alarmed about one o'clock by a piercing cry, which vibrated along the corridor. I sprung out of bed, got a light, and ran towards the room where my daughters slept. The monk had contrived to break from the dungeon in which I always kept him shut up, and giving the reins to his abominable impulses, had betaken himself directly to the door of my daughters' room, which he had burst in with his foot.

"By good luck, the lad Francis had been awoke by extreme thirst, and was going to get water in the court, when he heard the monk's heavy step in the corridor. He ran up to him accordingly, and seized him from behind, just at the moment when he was entering the room; but the lad was too weak to get the better of the madman. They wrestled together, and both fell out of the room again into the corridor, the girls, meanwhile, screaming loudly.

"Just at this time I came up. The monk had got Francis on the ground, and was grappling him by the throat in such a manner that he would very soon have made an end of his victim. Without losing a moment, therefore, I seized the maniac, and tore him away. Then suddenly, before I could understand how he could accomplish it, I saw a knife gleaming in his clenched hand, with which he directly struck at me; but Francis, who had now recovered, seized his arm, and, as I am a strong man, we succeeded in pinning the wretched man to the wall, in such manner, that his breath was almost squeezed out of his body.

"The noise had by that time roused all my people from their sleep, and they came running to the spot. We bound the monk with ropes, and threw him into the tower; then I brought a horse-whip, and inflicted on him such a castigation, that he sobbed and moaned most lamentably.

"'Thou incorrigible miscreant!' said I, 'this is all far too little for thy deserts. Thou, who wouldst have seduced my daughter, and hast, with thy knife, aimed at the life of thy preserver, were I to do justice, death itself would be too little for thee!'

"Hereupon he howled aloud with horror; for the apprehension of death seemed always quite to annihilate him. The following morning we found that he could not be removed; for he lay there as if dead, in the most miserable depression and exhaustion, so that involuntarily I could not help once more taking compassion upon him.

"Consequently I made a bed be prepared for him in a better apartment, where my wife nursed him with strong soups, and gave him from our domestic dispensary whatever drugs were requisite. Moreover, you must know, sir, that my wife, when alone, has the good Christian habit of singing to herself some pious hymn or favourite anthem, in which she sometimes desires my daughter Anne to join with her. This happened to take place several times near the bed of the sick man. Then he began to sigh heavily, and to look at my wife and Anne with an aspect of the deepest melancholy, and frequently tears forced their way over his cheeks. Sometimes he moved his hand and fingers as if he would cross himself; but could not succeed in it, his hand fell down powerless; many times, too, he uttered low and imperfect tones, as if he were about to join in the anthem; in short, he began perceptibly to recover.

"Then, according to monastic habits, he crossed himself very often, and prayed in a low voice. At last he began to sing Latin songs, the words of which my wife and daughter, of course, did not understand; but their music, their admirably deep, solemn cadence, penetrated so deeply into their hearts, that they could not express how much they had been, by the sick man's conduct, moved and edified.

"The monk was now so far recovered, that he rose from bed, and could walk about the house; but his appearance, and whole manner were completely changed. His eyes now looked mild and tranquil, whereas before they had gleamed with a malicious fire. According to conventual rules, he now walked about softly, and with clasped hands, in an attitude of constant devotion. Every trace of madness had vanished from his aspect and conduct. He would take nothing for food, but vegetables, bread, and water. It was only of late that I had forced him to sit at my table; to eat our ordinary provisions, and to allow himself, now and then, a small draught of wine. At these times he said grace, and we were delighted with his discourse, which was often unusually eloquent.

"Frequently he went alone, walking through the woods, where it chanced that I met him one day, and, without attaching much importance to the question, I asked him whether he now thought of returning to his convent. He seemed much affected. 'My friend,' said he, 'it is to you that I am indebted, under Heaven, for the rescue of my soul. You have saved me from eternal destruction. Even now I cannot bear to part with you; let me, therefore, remain here. Alas! have compassion on me, whom the devil has thus enticed and misled, and who would have been for ever lost, if the guardian saint, to

whom he yet prayed in hours of terror, had not brought him, in his madness, to this forest.

"'You found me,' continued the monk, after a short pause, 'in a condition altogether depraved, and therefore cannot have guessed that I was once a promising youth, gifted by nature with many excellent endowments; whom nothing but an enthusiastic love of solitude, and of deep meditation, led to a convent. My brethren there all looked on me with regard and affection, and I lived as happily as any one within the walls of a cloister can possibly do. By piety and exemplary conduct I gained a high reputation, and already people beheld in me the future prior.

"'It happened, unfortunately for me, that one of the brethren returned home from distant travels, and brought with him to our convent various relics, which he had carefully collected on his journey. Among them was an extraordinary sealed-up bottle, which, it was said, St Anthony had one time taken from the devil. This relic was, like all the rest, preserved with great reverence, though there appeared to me something in the nature of it wholly opposite to the true spirit of devotion, and indeed ludicrous and absurd. However, by commencing in this manner, my attention was gradually directed more and more to the subject, till at last an indescribable longing took possession of me to know what was actually in the bottle. I succeeded at last in getting it into my possession, opened it, and found therein a strong drink, which exhaled a very delightful perfume, and tasted very sweetly, and which, therefore, I drank out, even to the last drops.

"'In what manner my spirit and disposition were now at once wholly changed, —how I felt a burning thirst for the pleasures of the world,—how vice, in seductive form, appeared to me as the very highest object of pursuit in this life, I can only hint at, but cannot adequately describe. In short, my life became a continued chain of shameful crimes, till at last, notwithstanding my devilish artifice and cunning, I was betrayed to the prior, who, accordingly, sentenced me to perpetual imprisonment in the dungeons of the convent.

"'When I had passed several weeks in a damp dark prison, I cursed myself and my existence—I blasphemed God and the Saints. Thereupon the devil came to me in a glowing atmosphere of red flame, and said to me, that if I would turn away my soul wholly and utterly from the service of the Most High, and swear allegiance to him alone, he would set me directly at liberty. Howling, I fell upon my knees, and cried out, 'There is no God whom I serve! —Thou alone art my master; and from the fervour of thy fire stream forth all the pleasures and enjoyments of this life!'

"'Scarcely had I uttered these wild words, when there arose a roaring wind like a hurricane, and my prison walls groaned and cracked, as if agitated by an earthquake. An indescribable voice, like the piping shrill tone of the wind in autumn, vibrated through the air. The iron bars of the window fell down, broken into fragments; and, hurled out by some invisible power, I found myself standing in the court of the convent.

"'At that moment the moon gleamed clear and powerful through the clouds, and in her light shone above me the statue of St Anthony, which was erected

at a fountain in the middle of the court. An inexpressible horror now seized on me; my frame shook with the agony of conscious guilt. I threw myself prostrate and annihilated before the Saint, renounced the devil, and prayed for mercy. But then dark clouds rose up into the sky, and again the hurricane roared around me. My senses were lost, and I recovered myself, for the first time, in the forest, where I raged about, delirious with hunger and despair, out of which situation you rescued me.'

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"Such," continued the forester, "was the Capuchin's story, and it made upon me an impression so deep, that, even after the lapse of many months, I am able thus to repeat it, word for word. Since that time the monk has behaved himself with so much piety and consistency, that we all conceived an affection for him; and on this account it is to me the more inexplicable how his madness during the last night should have broken out so violently again."

"Do you not know, then," said I, "from what Capuchin convent the fugitive has come?"

"He has been silent on that head," said the forester; "and I am the less inclined to ask him regarding it, because it is probable this may be the same unhappy man, who, not long ago, was a constant subject of discourse at our Prince's court. Yet there was no knowledge of his being in this neighbourhood; and for the monk's sake, I by no means wished that my suspicions should be changed into conviction, as I should then have been compelled to announce the truth at the *residenz*."

"But I at least may hear your suspicions," said I; "for, being a stranger, I am not involved in the consequences; besides, I shall solemnly promise not to repeat what you may communicate."

"You must know, then," said the forester, "that the sister of our reigning Princess is Abbess of the Cistertian Convent at Kreuzberg. The Abbess had taken under her care the son of a poor woman, (betwixt whose husband and our Prince's family some mysterious connection subsisted,) and provided for his support and education. By his own desire, he became a Capuchin monk, and acquired, as a pulpit orator, great reputation. The Abbess frequently wrote to her sister in praise of her chosen *eléve*; but not long ago her style on this subject became completely changed, and she deeply deplored that she had irrecoverably lost him. It was rumoured that, on account of the misuse of a certain relic, he had been banished from that convent, of which he had been so long the chief ornament. All this I learned from a conversation of the Prince's physician with another gentleman of the court, at which I happened, not long ago, to be present. They mentioned some other very remarkable circumstances, which, however, have escaped me, as I did not hear the whole distinctly, and durst not trouble them with questions. I am, therefore, not prepared on all particulars of the story, which in part remains to me inexplicable.

"Yet, though the monk, who is now in our house, describes his leaving the monastery in a different manner, this may be the work of his own

imagination. He may have dreamed all that he tells about his escape; and, in short, I am persuaded that this monk is no other than Brother Medardus, the Capuchin, whom the Prioress educated, and whom the devil enticed to all sorts of crimes, until Heaven at last punished him with the infliction of utter insanity."

Chapter XXIV

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When the forester pronounced the name of Medardus, my whole frame violently shook, nay, the story throughout had even, physically and corporeally, tormented me, so that at every word I felt almost as if daggers were piercing to my heart; and it was with great difficulty that I prevented my agitation from being observed by my companion. I felt convinced that the monk had spoken only the truth, both with regard to the relic and direct agency of the devil; nay, that it could have been nothing else but a repetition of the same infernal drink that had now renewed in him this horrible delirium.

But my own situation had again become degraded. I found myself more and more confirmed into the mere plaything of that mysterious and malicious destiny, which had so effectually wrapt its indissoluble toils around me, so that, while I madly believed myself free, I was, in truth, only beating about, like a captive bird in a cage, within barriers, from which I could find no outlet.

The good and pious lessons of my old friend Cyrillus, on which I had bestowed no attention; the appearance of the young Count and his volatile tutor, all came back on my memory. I was now clearly instructed whence had proceeded that sudden alteration which I had experienced both in mind and body. I was utterly ashamed of the delusions to which I had been subjected, and of my criminal conduct. But, alas! this shame, which was the emotion of a selfish worldling, rather than a penitent, appeared to me at the moment as equivalent to the deep repentance, the self-annihilation which I ought in my inmost heart to have felt and cherished.

Thus I had sunk into deep reflection, and scarcely listened to the old man, who once more recurred to his hunting stories, describing to me various adventures which he had encountered with poachers, etc. etc.

The twilight had now drawn on, and at last we stood opposite to the covert in which it was said that there were black game or partridges. The forester placed me in a proper station and attitude, admonished me once more that I was not to speak nor move, but, with the utmost care, to hold my gun on the cock, and ready to fire.

The huntsmen softly glided away to their several places, and I was left standing alone in the dim light, which always became more obscure. Seldom have I known visions more strange than what arose to my bewildered senses at that moment. Forms and features, imagery and adventures out of my past life, stept out vividly, like the illusions of a phantasmagorie, amid the gloom of the dark forest, before me. Among them were visions even of my earliest years. I beheld alternately my mother and the Abbess. They looked at me with

a severe and reproving aspect. Euphemia, too, habited in luxurious splendour, came floating and rustling up, as if to salute me. But her visage was deadly pale, and I liked not the gleam of her darkly-glaring eyes. I shrunk, therefore, from her proffered embrace, whereupon she lifted up her hands, in a threatening attitude, against me. "They are steeped in blood," cried I, "that drops reeking to the earth. They are died in the life-blood from Hermogen's wounds!"

Instantly, as I uttered aloud these delirious words, there came over my head a great whirring of wings, so that by the noise I was quite stunned and confounded. It was a large covey of partridges. I directly put my gun to my shoulder, and shot, blindfold and at random, into the air, whereupon two birds fell directly to the ground.

"Bravo!" cried one of the huntsmen, who had been standing at a short distance, while at the same moment, as the stragglers of the covey started up, he fired, and brought down a third partridge. Shots afterwards reverberated all round us. The air was filled with smoke, and the *chasseurs* at last assembled, every one bearing his own proper booty.

The lad to whom I had been stationed nearest, related, not without sly side-looks at me, how, when the partridges rose on the wing, I had cried out aloud, as if in great affright, and then, without once taking aim, had shot blindly into the midst of them, though he was obliged to allow, that I had at the same time killed two birds. Nay, he insisted that, in the twilight, it had appeared to him as if I held the gun in a direction totally wrong; yet the birds were struck, by which result he seemed to have been brought into great perplexity.

The old forester was mightily diverted, and laughed aloud at the notion that I could be frightened in such manner by a covey of partridges, and that I had then only shot at random among them. "However," added he, "I shall nevertheless trust that you are an honest Christian hunter, and no *freischutz*—no devil's marksman—who can hit whatever he likes, whether he aims at it or not." This unpremeditated jest of the old man struck my inmost heart, and even the good luck attending my random shot, at that moment filled me with horror. More than ever discontented, and torn by conflicting impulses, I became wholly involved in doubt and mystery, which, by their destructive influence, continued to darken my whole existence.

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On our return to the *forst-haus*, Christian announced that the monk had kept himself quite quiet in his prison, had not spoken a word, and would not accept of any nourishment.

"It is impossible now," said the forester, "that he can remain any longer with me; for who can say that his madness, which is obviously incurable, might not break out again, and, in consequence, some horrible misfortune be brought upon our house? To-morrow, therefore, he must, as early as possible, be sent off with Christian into the town. The deposition that I thought it best to draw up, as to my whole adventures with him, has been long since ready, and in town he may be at once taken to the mad-house."

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This night, when I was again left alone in my chamber, the same frightful visions that had haunted me in the wood, once more regained their full influence. More especially Hermogen, like a horrible ghastly spectre, stood, in the dimness of the half-lighted room, before me, and when mustering courage to dare the worst, I tried to look fixedly on the apparition, it was changed into that of the delirious monk. Both seemed, according to my confused perceptions, to be melted into one, and thus perhaps impersonized the warning influence of a higher power, which interposed to save me just as I stood upon the very brink of destruction.

While undressing, I stumbled over the basket-bottle, which still lay upon the floor. The monk had drained it even to the last drops; thus I was protected completely from any temptation to drink more. But even the bottle itself, from which there exhaled a strong stupifying odour, I hurled away through the open window, over the wall of the court, in order to annihilate at once every operation of this damnable Elixir.

By degrees I became more tranquil, and found at last some consolation in the belief, that in point of intellect, I must be greatly elevated over that monk, who, by a scanty draught out of my bottle, had been roused into furious madness. I felt also that the present dangers had passed over me, for the forester believed that his maniac monk was the Capuchin Medardus; and, from all this, I inferred the favourable warning of Providence, whose purpose it was not that I should utterly perish.

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Irresistibly I felt myself drawn towards the Prince's *residenz*. There it was possible that an introduction to the sister of the Abbess, who was said to bear a great resemblance to the latter, might restore to me my long-lost disposition towards a life of simple piety, and to those pure enjoyments which had attracted me in youth. In order to reanimate the most vivid recollections of that period, even a sight of the Princess was, in my present tone of feelings, all that would be requisite; but as to the means by which an interview with her might be obtained, I resolved to submit myself wholly to chance.

Scarcely was it day-break when I heard the voice of the forester in the court. I had agreed to set out early with his son, and therefore dressed as quickly as possible. When I came down stairs, there was a rough *leiter-wagen* at the door, prepared for departure. The three servants now brought out the monk, who, with a deadly-pale and distorted countenance, allowed himself to be led, without uttering a word. He would answer no questions—he would accept of no food; indeed, scarcely seemed to notice those who were around him. Accordingly, they lifted him upon the carriage, and bound him with ropes; for his present condition appeared very doubtful, and no one could be secure against the sudden breaking out of his malady.

As they bound his limbs, his visage was convulsively writhen, and he heaved a deep sigh, with an expression so piteous, that his situation wounded me to the heart. Between him and me there subsisted some mysterious relationship, as to the nature of which, I could not yet even guess; but to his misery and probable destruction I owed my present hopes of safety.

Christian, and one of the huntsmen, took their places beside him in the carriage. It was not till they were driving away that his looks happened to fall directly on me, whereupon his features immediately assumed an expression of wonder and perplexity. As the carriage receded, his eyes still remained intently gazing on me.

"Mark you," said the forester, "how strangely he watches you. I do believe that your presence in the dining-room contributed very much to his frenzy; for even in his lucid intervals he has always been timid, and has cherished the suspicion that a stranger was to come who would put him to death, of which he always entertains an unbounded horror. Being aware of this, I have often, when in the wildest of his paroxysms, by threatening to shoot him, produced perfect calmness and submission."

I now felt lightened and relieved by the consciousness that this monk, who seemed to present a horrible and distorted shadow of myself, was effectually removed from my presence. I rejoiced, too, in my anticipation of the *residenz*, believing that the load of that gloomy and obscure fate by which I had been oppressed, would at last be taken from my shoulders,—that I should be gifted with new energies, and acquire strength to tear myself from the grasp of that malicious demon, to whom I had hitherto been subjected.

After breakfast, the handsome travelling equipage of the forester drove up to the door; I could not prevail on his wife to accept of a little money in requital for the hospitality that she had shewn to me; but to his daughters I was luckily able to give some articles of *bijouterie* which I found in my portmanteau, having purchased them at the fair in Frankenburg. The whole family took leave of me as affectionately as if I had been for a long time resident among them; but the old man did not let me go without some farther jokes upon my peculiar genius and success as a sportsman. Under the bright golden gleams of a fine autumnal day, we at last drove off.

Chapter XXV

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The *residenz* of the Prince presented a complete contrast to the trading town which I had left. In extent, it was much smaller, but was more regularly and handsomely built. Several broad streets, planted with double rows of flourishing trees, seemed more to belong to the laying out of a park, or English garden, than to a town. There was here no bustle of trade; all was, on the contrary, still and solemn—an impression perhaps deepened by the kind of atmosphere peculiar to that season of the year (the decline of autumn) when I arrived at the capital. The quiet was only now and then interrupted by the rattling course of some coroneted carriage. In the dress and demeanour even of the lower ranks, there was an attempt at the polite and ornamental, yet without vain ostentation; while, as I walked through the streets, although a perfect stranger, yet my appearance probably being approved of, I was saluted with a respectful bow, and wave of the hat, from every passenger.

The palace of the Prince was by no means large, nor even built in a grand style; yet, with regard to elegance and just proportions, it was one of the finest buildings that I had ever seen. Around it was a very beautiful park, which, by the possessor's liberality, was thrown open to all the world, while, as usual in Germany, not a single flower was plucked, nor an ornament displaced or disfigured, not even a blade of grass injured by passengers quitting the gravel walks.

At the hotel where I had put up, I was told that the Prince frequently enjoyed an evening promenade with his family through the park; and that many inhabitants of the town watched that opportunity of paying their respects to, or seeing, *en passant*, their respected sovereign.

Accordingly, at the proper hour, I hastened to the grounds, and observed the Prince, with his consort and a small train of attendants, step out from the *vestibule* of the palace. Very soon, as they drew nearer, my whole attention was directed to the Princess, whom I should have instantly recognised, only by her resemblance to the Abbess, which was striking and extraordinary. The same height and dignity; the same grace in every gesture; the same intellectual gleam of the eyes, and the free, unclouded forehead and fascinating smile. Only she appeared younger in years, and in shape fuller and rounder than the Abbess. She came close past me, so that I heard also the tone of her voice, as she spoke with some ladies who happened to be in the *allée*, while the Prince walked behind, seemingly absorbed in deep discussion with a grave, formal-looking man.

The looks and behaviour of this noble family, and the simplicity of dress, the total absence of display evinced both by them and their immediate train, were all in harmony. One could easily perceive that the good manners and spirit of

respectful order which prevailed through the town, had their origin in the example of the court. By chance I had my station near a lively little man, who gave me answers readily to all the questions that I was inclined to put to him, adding spontaneously many remarks of his own, which to me were very opportune and interesting.

When the Prince and Princess had passed by, he proposed to me, as a stranger, to take a walk through the park, and to point out to me the various objects which, as works of art, were there most to be admired.

This was an offer precisely such as I had wished for, and I gladly availed myself of his politeness. As we proceeded through the grounds, beneath dark shadowy rows of beeches, elms, and poplars, I expressed with great sincerity my admiration of the delightful soil and climate of the *residenz*, and the luxuriant growth of the noble trees.

But as to the numberless buildings in imitation of ancient temples, where pillars, that should have been of gigantic height, could be measured at an arm-length from the ground;—Gothic chapels, for example, where the attention of the builder had been concentrated on trifling ornaments, instead of the construction of a grand and intellectual *whole*;—of all *these* I expressed freely my decided disapprobation; consequently, he endeavoured to defend these erections by the usual argument, that they were in a park *indispensable*, if it were no more than to guard against the inconvenience of a sudden shower. To this I replied, that simple buildings, such as romantic cottages, root-houses, etc. would be equally useful, and free from that blame of bad taste which I attached to the now existing temples, mosques, and chapels.

"To say the truth, I am quite of your opinion," said the stranger; "but, meanwhile, you must know, that the design of all these buildings, and of the whole park, proceeds from our Prince himself; and this circumstance, of course, softens down, at least to us, who are under his dominion, all tendency to severe criticism or censure.

"The Prince is, in truth, one of the best of men. He has acted always on that admirable principle, that his subjects are not there to serve and minister to him, but that he is appointed guardian over them, and is responsible for their comfort and welfare. The liberty of speaking freely and aloud whatever one thinks; the low rate of taxes and consequent cheapness of provisions; the extreme lenity, nay, invisibility, of the police, (who, though always watchful, never make their appearance except on occasion of some flagrant misdemeanour,) the removal of all troublesome and superfluous soldiery, the calm regularity with which affairs of business and merchandize are carried on; all these circumstances must make a residence in our capital very agreeable to a stranger.

"I would lay any bet, that you have never yet been asked after your name and rank; nor has the innkeeper at your hotel, as it happens in other places, marched in with a great book under his arm, in which one is obliged, *nolens volens*, with an abominable stump of a pen, and ink made of soot and water, to enter his name and condition in the world.

"In short, the whole economy and arrangements of our small kingdom, in which there prevail a real prudence and wisdom, proceed directly from our excellent Prince; whereas, *formerly*, at this very town, people were tormented by the pedantic formality of a court, whose only aim was to represent the expenses and parade of a neighbouring government of far greater power and wealth, in a *pocket-edition*.

"Our Prince is a sincere and unaffected lover of the arts and sciences. Therefore, every good artist, and every man of real learning, is welcome to him; for, as to rank in life, he lays on that no stress whatever. He considers only the degree of intellectual acquirements which a stranger actually does or does not possess; and accordingly shews or withdraws his favourable countenance.

"But even in the accomplishments of our Prince, it is impossible to deny, that something of an alloy of pedantry has crept in, which is partly owing to errors in his early education, and which expresses itself in his improvements, by an overstrained and slavish adherence to this or that particular school or fashion. He himself drew out, with the most laborious minuteness, the plans for every building in the park; and even the slightest departure of the workmen from the given models, which he had searched out and put together from an hundred antiquarian repositories, vexed him in the highest degree. Every pillar, portico, tower, and cupola, must have its representative, however ludicrous the imitation in point of height and dimensions must of necessity be.

"By the same disposition to carry one or other favourite system to an *extreme*, our theatre now suffers, where the principles that he has once laid down, must on no account be departed from, although, in order to retain them, sometimes the most heterogeneous incongruities are forced together. In short, the Prince has a boundless variety of *hobbies*, which (to keep up the metaphor) he rides alternately; yet not one of them is of a description calculated to give offence, or do any real injury to his subjects. When this park was laid out, then he was architect and gardener *à la folie*. After that, some new fantasies about music wholly absorbed his attention; to which inspiration, however, we owe the fitting up of a most admirable and unrivalled choir and opera. Then painting took the *pas*, and occupied him so entirely, that, as an artist, he is no mean proficient.

"Even in the daily amusements of the Court, he shews the same disposition to extremes, and the same variability. Formerly, dancing was kept up almost every evening; *now*, there is on company-days a Pharo-Bank, and the Prince, without being in the least what is properly called a gamester, delights in watching and calculating all the intricacies of chance. But the pharo-table has continued already long enough; and there is wanting only some very trifling occurrence or impulse to bring something altogether new again on the carpet.

"This versatility has sometimes drawn upon our good Prince the reproach of a weak understanding. There are people who insist, that the mind of a wise man should always be like a still and waveless lake, reflecting the same images with calm and unchangeable fidelity. But, in my opinion, injustice is done

him; for it is merely from an extraordinary vivacity of spirit, that he thus gives the reins at all times to some favourite and passionate impulse. Hence no expense is spared on establishments contributing to the amusement and intellectual improvement of his subjects. These grounds, for example, whatever may be their defects, are always kept in the nicest order; our opera, chapel choir, and theatre, are munificently endowed; and our collection of pictures is at every opportunity augmented. As to the court amusements of gaming, etc. these are recreations, which, considering the Prince's sedulous application at other times to business, surely cannot be refused to him."

During this conversation, we passed by many very beautiful and picturesque masses and groups of trees, of which I renewed my expressions of admiration, praising also the fine varieties, which, from rising grounds, the eye commanded in the landscape.

"I ought not to forget," said my companion, "that although the Prince designed every architectural ornament, and had generally the superintendance of the park, yet he was indebted for the position of every thicket, group, or *allée* of trees, to the taste of our admirable Princess. She is indeed a complete landscape painter, after which, natural history, especially botany, is her favourite study. Hence you will find the rarest and most curious foreign plants and flowers, not arranged as if merely brought hither for show, but growing in artificial parterres as if on their native soil. The Princess, however, expressed an especial disgust to the awkwardly cut gods and goddesses in freestone, naiads and dryads, with which the park, in former days, was filled. These statues have therefore vanished; and you find only a few copies after the antique, which the Prince, on account of certain cherished remembrances, would not part with."

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It was now late in the evening, and we left the park. My companion readily accepted an invitation which I gave him to my hotel, where he at last announced himself as the *Inspector* of the Prince's picture-gallery.

After supper, and a bottle of excellent wine, when we had become better acquainted, I mentioned to him my earnest wish to obtain an introduction at court; whereupon he assured me, that nothing could be more easy than this, as every well-educated stranger was welcomed in the circle of his sovereign. I had only to make a visit to the Court-Marshal, and beg of him to present me to the Prince.

This diplomatic mode of introduction, however, by no means suited me, as I could scarcely hope to escape certain troublesome questions of whence I had come—what was my rank and profession, etc. I therefore resolved to trust to chance, which would soon throw a favourable opportunity in my way; and, accordingly, this soon after occurred.

One morning, as I was taking an early walk in the yet solitary park, the Prince, dressed in a simple blue surtout, and quite alone, came along an *allée*, directly meeting me. I saluted him *en passant*, as if he had been some one of whom I had no previous knowledge. Hereupon he stood still, and began a

conversation with the question, "Whether I was a stranger here?" I answered in the affirmative, adding, "that I had arrived only a few days before, with the intention of passing directly through; but that the charms of the situation, with the tranquillity, good order, and spirit of calm enjoyment, which everywhere seemed to prevail, had induced me to stay longer. Quite independent, and living merely for literature and the arts, I had now resolved to make this place my residence for some time, as everything by which I was surrounded had become to me more and more delightful and attractive."

By these expressions the Prince seemed obviously flattered, and he even offered himself as my *cicerone*, to explore the beauties of the park. I took special care not to betray that I had already seen everything, but availed myself of my previous knowledge, in order to throw in apt remarks and exclamations. I allowed myself to be led through all the temples, grottos, chapels, and pavilions, patiently listening to the Prince's long lectures about every building. He regularly named the ancient models after which every structure had been imitated; made me attend particularly to their minutest details; then referred, ever and anon, to the grand *morale*, the intellectual system which prevailed through the whole plan of the park; that harmony in confusion, "where all things differ, and yet all agree," which he thought should be adopted as the leading principle in laying out grounds of this sort.

The Prince then desired my opinion. I approved very cordially the natural charms of the place, and the luxuriant vegetation also of the well-disposed masses and groups of wood, with the shadowy *berceaux*; but as to the buildings, I expressed myself just as freely as I had before done to the gallery inspector. He listened to me attentively; seemed not altogether to reject my remarks, but at last cut all discussion short, by saying, that my notions were very good in theory, but that as to the actual practice, it was a different affair, of which I seemed to have but very little notion.

The conversation then turned upon the arts. I soon proved that I was a tolerable *connoisseur* of painting; and, as a practical musician, I ventured many observations, in opposition to his ideas, which, though ingeniously and precisely delivered, only served to shew that he was far more studied than persons of his rank generally are; but, at the same time, that of the *real attributes* of musical genius he had no comprehension whatever. On the other hand, my objections only proved to the Prince that I was a *dilletante*, one of a class who are generally not much enlightened by the actual practice of their theories. He instructed me, however, in the proper characteristics (or what, according to him, ought to be the proper characteristics) of a sublime picture, and a perfect opera.

I heard much about colouring, drapery, pyramidal groups; of serious and of comic music; of scenes for the *prima donna*; of choruses; of effect, *chiaro oscuro*, light and shade, etc. etc.; to all which medley I listened quietly, for I perceived that the Prince took a pleasure in his own discourse.

At last he abruptly cut short his own eloquence with the question, "Do you play pharo?" to which I answered in the negative.—"Well, sir," said he, "that is a most admirable game. In its lofty simplicity, it is the true and proper pastime for a man of genius. One is thereby carried out of himself; or, to

speak better, if he is possessed of due powers of mind, he is lifted up to a station from which he can contemplate all the strange complications and entanglements which are (otherwise invisibly) spun by the mysterious power which we call Chance. Loss and gain are the two points on which, like pivots, the grand machine is moved; and by this machine we are irresistibly carried onward, while it is impelled ceaselessly by its own internal springs. This game, sir, you must absolutely learn. I will myself be your teacher."

I assured him that I had hitherto felt no particular turn for gaming, and that I had always understood the inclination for it to be highly pernicious and destructive. The Prince smiled, and fixing on me his bright, penetrating eyes, resumed; "Ay, there are indeed childish superficial minds, who maintain that argument; and, consequently, you will suppose that I am a gamester, who wishes to draw you into his nets; know, then, that I am the Prince! If you are pleased with your residence at my capital, then remain here, and visit at my palace, where you will find that we sometimes play pharo. Yet I by no means allow that any one under my roof shall subject himself to loss, though the stake must of necessity be high in order to excite interest; for fortune herself is lazy and stupid as long as nothing but what is insignificant is offered to her arbitration."

Already on the point of leaving me, the Prince turned round, and asked, "With whom have I been speaking?"—I answered that my name was Leonard; that I lived as a literary man, *particulier*; for the rest, I was by no means a *nobile*, nor a man of rank; and, therefore, perhaps did not dare to make use of the advantages which his highness had thus offered to me.

"What the devil," said he, "has nobility to do with it? You are, as I have clearly convinced myself, a very ingenious and well-informed man. Literature, science, and the arts, confer on you nobility, and render you fully qualified to appear in our circles. Adieu, Mr Leonard!—*Au revoir!*"

Chapter XXVI

*

Thus my wishes were far more readily, and more early than I could have expected, fulfilled. For the first time in my life I should appear as a courtier. All the absurd stories, therefore, which I had read in romances, of cabals, quarrels, intrigues, and conspiracies, floated through my brain. According to the most received authorities among novel writers, the Prince must be surrounded and blindly led by all sorts of impostors; especially, too, the Court-Marshal must be an insipid, proud, high-born coxcomb; the Prime Minister a malicious, miserly villain; the lords in waiting gay and unprincipled libertines. Every countenance must artificially wear the most agreeable expression, while in the heart all is selfishness and deception. In society they (the courtiers) must profess to each other the most unbounded friendship and attachment. They must bend to the very earth in apparent humility, while every one endeavours to trip up his neighbour's heels in the dark, so that he may fall unpitied, and his pretended friend come into his place, which he may keep only till some one else plays off the same manoeuvre against him. Finally, the court ladies must be ugly, proud, revengeful; glistening with diamonds, nodding with feathers, painted up to the eyes, but withal, amorous, constantly engaged in venal intrigues, and laying snares for the unwary stranger, which he must fly from as he would from the devil.

Such was the absurd picture which, from the books I had read at college, had remained vividly on my recollection. The conversation of the Prior, indeed, might have afforded me more rational ideas; still it seemed to me that a court must be the sphere, of all others, where the Arch-Enemy of mankind exerted his pre-eminent and unresisted dominion. Hence it was not without timidity that I looked forward to my promised introduction; but an inward conviction, that *here* my lot in life was finally to be decided, and the veil of mystery withdrawn, drove me still onwards, so that, at the appointed hour, with a palpitating heart, but struggling as manfully as I could with my disquietude, I found myself in the outer hall of the palace.

My residence at the commercial town of Frankenburg had done much to rub off the rust of my conventual habits. Being by nature gifted with a graceful and prepossessing exterior, I soon accustomed myself to that free and unembarrassed demeanour, which is proper to the man of the world. That paleness, which generally disfigures even handsome features among the inhabitants of the cloister, had now vanished from my countenance. I was at that time of life when our mental and bodily energies are generally in their zenith. Conscious power, therefore, gave colour to my cheeks and lustre to my eyes, while my luxuriant dark hair completely concealed all remains of the *tonsure*. Besides all this, I wore a handsome full dress suit of black, a chef-d'oeuvre of Damon, which I had brought with me from Frankenburg.

Thus it was not to be wondered at that I made a favourable impression on those who were already assembled in the outer hall, and this they did not fail to prove, by their polite advances and courteous expressions. As, according to my romantic authorities, the Prince, when he revealed his rank to me in the park, should have thrown back his *surtout*, and discovered to my sight a brilliant star, (which he had failed to do,) so I had expected that every one whom I should meet in the palace should be clad in the richest silks and embroidery. How much was I surprised, therefore, to find that, with the exception of ribbons and orders, their dresses were all as plain as that in which I myself appeared.

By the time, therefore, that we were summoned to the audience-chamber, my prejudices and embarrassment had worn off; and the manners of the Prince himself, who came up to me, with the words, "Ha! there is Mr Leonard," completely restored my courage. His highness continued for some time in conversation with me, and seemed particularly diverted by the freedom and severity with which I had criticised his buildings in the park.

The folding doors were now opened, and the Princess, accompanied by some of her ladies, came into the room. Immediately on her appearance, as the glare of the lustres fell on her features, I recognised, more forcibly than ever, her exact likeness to the Abbess. The ladies of the assembly surrounded her for some time, but at last I was summoned, and introduced, after which ceremony her eyes followed me, with a gaze obviously betraying astonishment and inward emotion. Then turning to an old lady who stood near her, she said a few words in a whisper, at which the latter also seemed disquieted, and looked on me with a scrutinizing aspect.

All this was over in a moment, for other presentations took place; after which the assembly divided into groups, and engaged in lively conversation. One recollected, indeed, that he was in the circle of a court, and under the eye of the sovereign, yet without feeling on that account constrained or embarrassed. —I scarcely recognised a single figure that would have been in keeping with the caricatures that I had previously drawn. The Court-Marshal was a lively and happy-looking old man, without any particular attributes, either of pride or formality. The lords in waiting were sprightly youths, who, by no one symptom, betrayed that their characters were depraved and vicious. Two ladies, who immediately waited on the Princess, seemed to be sisters. They were uninteresting, insignificant, and, as luck would have it, dressed with extraordinary plainness.

There was, however, one little man in the room, with a comical visage, long nose, and sparkling eyes, who irresistibly engaged my attention. He was dressed in black, with a long steel-mounted sword, and wound himself, with incredible dexterity, like a serpent through the crowd, appearing now here, now there, but resting never, and apparently raising laughter (whether with him, or at him, I knew not) wherever he went. This person (having ventured an inquiry) I understood was the Prince's physician.

The old lady with whom the Princess had spoken had kept her eyes on me, and contrived to manoeuvre so skilfully, that, before I was aware of her plans,

I found myself alone with her in a window recess. She began a conversation with me, in which, guardedly as it was managed, I perceived very clearly that her only object was to gain a knowledge of my situation and circumstances in life. I was prepared for some occurrence of this kind, and being convinced that the simplest story was always the safest, I told her that I had formerly studied theology, but that having received from my father a competent fortune, I now travelled about for my own pleasure and improvement.

My birth-place, I said, was on the Polish frontiers of Prussia; and I gave it by the way such a horrible unpronounceable name, that the old lady made no attempt to repeat it after me. "Well, sir," said she, "you have a countenance which might here raise many, and not altogether pleasant recollections; and you are, perhaps, as to rank, more than you wish to appear, for your demeanour by no means resembles that of a student of theology."

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After refreshments had been handed round, we went into another room, where the pharo-table was in readiness. The Court-Marshal was the banker; but I understood afterwards that his agreement with the Prince allowed him to retain all his winnings, while the latter indemnified him against every loss, so that the bank remained always in the same state.

The gentlemen now assembled themselves round the table, with the exception of the physician, who never played, but remained with the ladies, who took no interest in the game. The Prince desired that I would station myself next to him, while, in a few words, he very clearly explained to me the rules and principles of pharo, at the same time selecting my cards, as I was here completely a novice.

But there was not a single card chosen by the Prince for himself, that was not attended by the worst possible luck; and as long as I followed his counsel, the same fate attended mine. Besides, I was suffering considerable losses. A louis d'or was the very lowest point; my limited exchequer was fast ebbing away, and this painfully brought back on me the question that had often occurred, "What was I to do in the world, when my last ducat was expended?"

A new *taille* was begun, and I begged of the Prince that he would now leave me to myself, as it seemed that I was born to be unlucky, and was drawing him into the same fatality. The Prince agreed, with a smile of perfect good humour. He said, that the best way to recover my loss would, in his opinion, have been, to follow the lead of an experienced player; however, that he was very curious to learn how I would behave when alone, having in myself such confidence.

I had not said that I had any such confidence; and now blindfold and at random, I drew out a card from my hand; it was the Queen. It may seem absurd, but is nevertheless true, that I thought the caricature features on this card had a resemblance to Aurelia! I stared at it accordingly, and became so lost in my own reflections, that it was only the call of the banker, "All's ready," that awoke me from my reverie.

Then, without a moment's hesitation, I drew out the five louis d'ors, all that I had left, and staked them on the Queen. Beyond my expectations this succeeded! Then I always staked more and more on the Queen always higher as my gains increased, and I never lost a single round.

At every new stake my antagonists and the by-standers cried out—"No; it is impossible! This time she must prove unfaithful!" But, on the contrary, I won, and the cards of every other player turned against him—"Now, this is unheard of—this is miraculous!" resounded from all quarters, while, completely reserved, and wrapt up within myself, with my whole thoughts fixed only on Aurelia, I scarcely noticed the *rouleaux* of gold, which the banker shoved one after another over to me.

In short, the Queen had, in the four last *tailles*, invariably gained, and I had my pockets full of gold. I had won about two thousand louis d'ors; and though I thus found myself suddenly freed from all pecuniary embarrassment, yet I could not repress a strange feeling of perplexity, and inward self-condemnation.

Of course, I perceived an exact coincidence between my success at pharo, and my good fortune in shooting, with eyes closed and at random, the two partridges when in company with the forester. It was obvious that the result on both occasions was not owing to any superior skill or management of mine, but to some higher power to which I was wholly subservient. This constant recurrence too, and reflection of Aurelia's form and features, could be nothing but an abominable scheme of the devil to draw me into wickedness, and the misuse which I had now made of that truly sacred and beloved image filled me with horror and aversion!

In the most gloomy mood of mind, and utterly at variance with myself, I was gliding about in the morning through the park, when the Prince, who was accustomed to take a walk at the same hour, joined me.

"Well, Mr Leonard," said he, "how do you like my game of pharo? What think you of the humours and caprices of Fortune, who kindly excused your absurd conduct, and flung the gold into your hands?" I was not ready with an answer, and the Prince therefore resumed—"You had luckily stumbled on the *carte favorite*, but you must not trust to your luck again in this manner. You might carry the principle too far."

His highness now went into a long discussion, founded on this idea of the *carte favorite*, imparted to me various rules as to the doctrine of chances, and concluded by expressing his conviction that I would no doubt follow up zealously this commencement of my *bonne fortune* at play.

On the contrary, I assured his highness, "that it was my firm resolution never more to touch a card!" The Prince looked at me with surprise. "Even my yesterday's wonderful luck," said I, "has been the natural cause of this resolution; for all that I had formerly conceived of the pernicious and ruinous tendency of this game, has truly been realized and confirmed. In truth, there was in my very success something repugnant, and even horrible to my

feelings. I drew out a card, blindfold, and unawares. That card awoke in my mind painful, though cherished remembrances, of which I could not resist the influences. I went on accordingly, venturing stake after stake, as if some demon had placed it in my power to *command* fortune, though I had no real and moral right to the gain which thus fell to my share."

"I understand perfectly," said the Prince, "what you mean by painful and cherished remembrances. You have been an unfortunate lover, and the card brought to your recollection the image of the lost fair one; though, begging your pardon, Mr Leonard, when I think of the pale complexion and flat features of your favourite Queen, this seems not a little capricious. However, you thought on your lost mistress, and in that game of pharo, she was perhaps more true and faithful than she had been in real life. But what you are able to discover in all this that is horrible and frightful, I cannot possibly conceive. On the contrary, you should rejoice that Fortune, even on any grounds, is so much inclined to favour you. Besides, if you are really vexed, this is not to be imputed to the pharo-table, but to the individual moods, the idiosyncrasies of your own mind."

"All that your highness has stated," said I, "may be perfectly correct; but I feel deeply that it is not merely the fear of loss on which my present dislike to gaming is founded. Gain itself, which only brings us more and more under a state of slavery to a mysterious fate, which would one day lead us to destruction, is equally dangerous. Yet, sire, I confess that I was yesterday on the point of seeing my travelling exchequer completely drained, which, considering my present distance from home, would have been to me no slight misfortune."

"Nay," said the Prince, "I should have infallibly learned this occurrence, and would have taken care that the loss should have been to you threefold repaid, for I certainly do not choose that any one should be ruined, in order to contribute to my amusement. Besides, any real evil of this kind cannot happen under my roof, for I know my players, and do not trust them out of my own sight."

"Yet, with submission," said I, "may not these very precautions take away all that freedom from the player, and thereby annihilate those fine involvements of chance, in which your highness takes delight? Or may not some individual, on whom the passion for play has violently seized, break out of such trammels, and rush on, unobserved, to his own destruction? Forgive my candour, sire. I believe also, that those very methods which your highness would adopt to prevent evil consequences, would, from the perverse nature of mankind, be looked upon by many as a disgusting and intolerable restraint."

"Say no more, Mr Leonard," said the Prince, "it is obvious, that from every opinion or idea of mine you are resolved to dissent." With these words he hastily retired, adding only an unceremonious and careless "adieu."

Chapter XXVII

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I knew not myself how I had been led to speak so freely on the subject, never having till now thought of gaming or its consequences; but the words, as on former occasions, seemed to be prompted for me by some invisible power, after whom I only repeated them. However this might be, I believed that I had now lost the favour of the Prince, and with it, the right of appearing on any future occasion within the walls of his palace.

In this belief, however, I was mistaken, for, on the same day, I received a card inviting me to a concert; and the Prince, whom I once more met in the park, said, *en passant*, with much politeness, "Good evening, Mr Leonard! You are to be with us to-night, and it is to be hoped that my *capelle* may gain some credit, and please you better than my park and my pharo-table have done."

The music was indeed very commendable. All was performed with great accuracy; but, at the same time, the pieces appeared to me not well chosen; for one destroyed, by contrast, the effect of the other; and, especially, there was one long act, which seemed to have been got up with particular care, and which, nevertheless, produced in me a hearty fit of *ennui*.

I took good care not to express my opinion audibly; and in this respect acted, for once, with prudence, as I was afterwards informed that this same long act, or scene, was one of the Prince's own composition.

When the music had concluded, I found myself unawares in the innermost circles of the court, and would have been willing even to take a hand at pharo, in order to reconcile myself wholly with the Prince. But, on entering the room where pharo had been played, I was not a little surprised to find no preparations for that game. On the contrary, small parties were seated at ordinary tables, over hands of Boston-whist, while the rest of the company kept up lively conversation. Even a regular course of story-telling was introduced. Old bon-mots were revived, and fresh anecdotes attentively listened to, provided they were agreeably delivered, even though not intrinsically of much importance.

Here my old gifts of loquacity and eloquence came opportunely to my aid; and, under the guise of romantic and poetical legends, I contrived to narrate many events out of my own life.

Thus I attracted attention and won applause from many listeners. The Prince, however, liked best whatever was cheerful and humorous; in which respects, the physician was not to be equalled. He was indeed inexhaustible.

This kind of pastime was at last carried so far, that individuals were chosen to read from their own MS. compositions, whatever they considered best suited for the present society. A kind of regular *esthetical* club was thus formed, where the Prince presided, and every one contributed as he best could. Among the rest, there was a certain professor from the *gymnasium*, who chose to read a very long paper on some new discoveries; and precisely in proportion as the few who knew anything about his science were interested and delighted, the others were *ennuyés* and restless. Among this majority was the Prince, who was evidently rejoiced when the physician very judiciously seized this time to introduce one of his stories, which, if not very original and witty in themselves, yet, from the drollery of his manner, were irresistible, and had at least a *naiveté* and facility which were highly acceptable, after the tiresome lecture of the professor.

"Your highness knows," said the physician, turning to the Prince, "that I never failed, when on my travels, to enter into my memorandum-book, portraits (in writing I mean) of all the strange characters and odd adventurers that fell in my way; and from this journal I am now about to repeat some notices to which I have hitherto not alluded, on account of their being perhaps too common-place, yet they seem to me not altogether undiverting.

"On my way home, about a year ago, I came to a large handsome village, about four German miles from Berlin; and being much fatigued, resolved to rest there, instead of going on to the capital. The landlord directly shewed me to a good room, where, after supper, I threw myself into bed, and directly fell asleep. About one in the morning, however, I was suddenly awoke by a noise, which, assimilating with a fearful dream with which I had just then been haunted, I imagined to be either the shrieking of an owl at the window, or the cries of a person in distress, for I had dreamed of both.

"It was, however, the sound of a German flute, which proceeded from a room very near me; but in my whole life, before or since, I have never heard such an attempt at music. The man must have had monstrous and gigantic powers of lungs; for in one loud shrill cutting key, he went on without mercy, so that the character of the instrument was perfectly annihilated. What added, if possible, to this enormity, was, that he blew everlastingly the same identical passage over and over, not granting me the slightest relief, by an endeavour at a tune, so that nothing could be conceived more abominable.

"I raved at, cursed, and abused this infernal musician, who so cruelly deprived me of needful rest, and by whom my ears were so barbarously outraged; but, like a wound-up piece of clock-work, the diabolical flute continued to utter the same notes over and over, until I thought the devil himself must be the player, for no one else could have had physical strength to hold out so long. At last I heard something thrown with great violence, and a loud crack, against the wainscot; after which there was dead silence, and I could for the rest of the night sleep in peace.

"In the morning I heard a great noise of quarrelling and scolding in the lower floor of the house. In the *row* I could now and then distinguish the voice of mine host, who was scarcely allowed, however, to throw in a word, by a man

who roared without ceasing, in broken German—'May your house be damned! Would that I had never been so unlucky as to cross the threshold! The devil himself must have brought me hither, where one can neither drink, eat, nor enjoy himself—where everything is infamously bad, and dog dear. There, sir, you have your money; and as for your rascally gin-shop, you shall never more see me again within its walls!'

"Having just then finished my toilet, I was in time to behold the author of all this disturbance. He was a little, withered man, in a coffee-brown coat, and a round *fox-red* wig, on which, with a martial air of defiance, he stuck a little grey hat; then ran out of the house towards the stable, from which I soon afterwards saw him re-appear, with a horse fully as odd-looking as himself, on which he mounted, and, at a heavy, awkward gallop, rode off the field.

"Of course I supposed he was like myself, an entire stranger, who had quarrelled with the landlord, and had now taken his final departure. I dismissed him, therefore, from my thoughts; but, at dinner-time, (having been induced to remain another day at the village,) how I was surprised, on taking my place at the *table d'Hote*, to perceive the same absurd coffee-brown figure, with the fox-red wig, who, without ceremony, drew in his chair opposite to mine!

"He had one of the ugliest, and most laughable visages that I had ever beheld. In his whole demeanour, there was a kind of grave and solemn absurdity that was irresistible. During dinner, I kept up a monosyllabic dialogue with my host, while the stranger continued to eat voraciously, and took no notice whatever of any one.

"At last, the innkeeper, with a sly wink at me, led the discourse to national peculiarities, and asked me, whether I had ever been acquainted with an Irishman, or knew what was meant by Irish bulls, for which that country was celebrated? 'Unquestionably,' said I; 'I have heard many such;' and a whole string of these blunders came at once into my head. I then told the story of the Irishman, who, when asked why he wore stockings with the wrong side out, answered, 'Because there was a hole in the other side;'—of the still better anecdote of another disciple of St Patrick, who was sleeping in the same bed with a choleric Scotch Highlander. An English wag, who was lodged in the same room, by way of a practical joke, took one of the Irishman's spurs, and, perceiving that he wast fast asleep, buckled it on his heel. Soon after, the Irishman happening to turn round, tore the Scotchman's legs with his spur; whereupon the latter, in great wrath, gave his companion a violent box on the ear, and the Englishman had the satisfaction of hearing betwixt them the following ingenious discourse:—

"'What devil,' said the Irishman, 'has got possession of you? and why are you beating me?'—'Because,' said the other, 'you have torn me with your spurs.'—'How is that possible? I took off my clothes.'—'And yet it is so—see only here.'—'Damnation!—you are in the right. The rascally waiter has pulled off my boots, but left on the spurs!'

"The story, however old, was new to the innkeeper, who broke out into immoderate laughter; but the stranger, who had now wound up his dinner

with a great draught of beer from a glass as high as a church tower, looked at me gravely, and said—'You have spoken well, sir. The Irishmen certainly do make these bulls; but this by no means depends on the character of the people, who are ingenious and witty, but on the cursed air of that damp country, which infects one with them, as with coughs and catarrhs. I myself, sir, am an Englishman, though born and bred in Ireland, and therefore am, on that account, subjected to the vile propensity of making bulls.'

"Hereupon the innkeeper laughed more and more, and I was obliged to join him heartily, for it was delightful that the Irishman, gravely lecturing on bulls, should *unconsciously* give us one of the very best as a specimen.

"The stranger seemed not in the least offended by our laughing. 'In England,' said he, with his finger on his nose, and dilating *his* eyes—'in England, the Irishmen are like strong spices added to society to render it tasteful. I am myself, in one respect, like Falstaff; I am not only witty in myself, but the cause of wit in others, which, in these times, is no slight accomplishment. Could you suppose it possible, that in the empty leathern brain of this innkeeper, wit, generated by me, is now and then roused? But mine host is, in this respect, a prudent man. He takes care not to draw on the small capital that he possesses of his own, but lends out a thought now and then at interest, when he finds himself in the society of the rich!'

"With these words, the little original rose and left us. I immediately begged the innkeeper to give me something of his history.

"'This Irishman,' said mine host, 'whose name is Ewson, and who, on that account, will have himself to be an Englishman, has now been here for the short period of twenty-two years! As a young man, I had just set up in the world, purchased a lease of this inn, and it happened to be on my wedding-day when Mr Ewson first arrived among us. He was then a youth, but wore his fox-red wig, his grey hat, and coffee-brown coat, exactly as you saw him to-day. He then seemed to be travelling in great haste, and said that he was on his return to his own country; however, hearing the band of music which played at my wedding feast, he was so much delighted with it, that he came into the house and insisted on making one of the party.

"'Hereupon, though he approved our music, yet he swore that it was only on board an English war ship that people knew how to dance; and to prove his assertion, gave us a hornpipe, whistling to it all the while most horribly through his teeth, fell down, dislocated his ancle, and was, of course, obliged to remain with us till it was cured.

"'Since that time he has never left my house, though I have had enough to do with his peculiarities. Every day through these twenty-two years, he has quarrelled with me. He despises my mode of life, complains that my bills are over-charged; that he cannot live any longer without roast-beef and porter; packs up his portmanteau, with his three red wigs one above the other, mounts an old broken-winded horse, and rides away.

"'This, however, turns out nothing more than a ride for exercise; for at dinner-time he comes in at the other end of the town, and in due time makes his

appearance at my table, eating as much of the despised dishes as might serve for any three men!

"'Once every year he receives from his own country a valuable bank-bill. Then, with an air of the deepest melancholy, he bids me farewell, calls me his best friend, and sheds tears, which I do also; but with me they are tears of laughter. After having, by his own account, made his will, and provided a fortune for my eldest daughter, he rides away slowly and pensively, so that the first time I believed he certainly was gone for good and all.

"'His journey, however, is only four German miles, viz. into the *residenz*, from whence he never fails to return on the third or fourth day, bringing with him two new coffee-brown coats, six new shirts, three wigs, all of the same staring and frightful red, a new grey hat, and other requisites for his wardrobe; finally, to my eldest daughter, though she is now eighteen, a paper of sugar-plums.

"'He then thinks no more either of residing in the capital, nor of his homeward journey. His afternoon expenses are paid every night, and his money for breakfast is thrown angrily at my head every morning.

"'At other times, however, he is the best-tempered man in the world. He gives presents every holiday to all my children, and in the village has done much real good among the poor; only, he cannot bear the priest, because he learned from the schoolmaster that the former had changed a gold piece that Mr Ewson had put into the box, and given it out in copper pennies! Since that time, he avoids him on all occasions, and never goes to church, and the priest calls him an atheist.

"'As before said, however, I have often trouble enough with his temper. On coming home just yesterday, I heard a great noise in the house, and a voice in furious wrath, which I knew to be Ewson's. Accordingly I found him in vehement altercation with the house-maid. He had, as usual with him, thrown away his wig, and was standing bald-pated in his shirt-sleeves before her, and holding a great book under her nose, wherein he obstinately pointed at something with his finger. The maid stuck her hands in her sides, told him he might get somebody else to play his tricks upon, that he was a bad wicked man, who believed in nothing, etc. etc. etc.

"'With considerable difficulty I succeeded in parting the disputants, and bringing the matter under arbitration. Mr Ewson had desired the maid to bring him a wafer to seal a letter. The girl never having written or sealed a letter in her life, at first did not in the least understand him. At last it occurred to her that the wafers he spoke of were those used at mass, and thought Mr E. wanted to mock at religion, because the priest had said he was an atheist. She therefore refused to obey him. Hereupon he had recourse to the dictionary, and at last got into such a rage, that he spoke nothing but English, which she imagined was gibberish of the devil's own inspiration. Only my coming in prevented a personal encounter, in which probably Mr Ewson would have come off with the worst.'

"I here interrupted mine host with the question, 'Whether it was Mr Ewson also who tormented me so much in the night with his flute-playing?' 'Alas! sir,' said he, 'that is another of his eccentricities, by which he frightens away all my night-lodgers. Three years ago one of my sons came on a visit here from the *residenz*. He plays well on the flute, and practises a good deal. Then, by evil chance, it occurred to Mr Ewson that he had also in former days learned to blow the flute, and never gave over till he prevailed on my son to sell him his instrument for a good round sum, and also a difficult concerto which he had brought with him from town.

"'Thereafter Mr Ewson, who has not the slightest pretensions to a musical ear, began with furious zeal to blow at this concerto. He came, however, only to the second solo of the first allegro. There he met with a passage which he could by no possible means bring out; and this one passage he has now blown at, through these three years, about a hundred times per day, till at last, in the utmost rage, he throws his flute and wig together against the wall.

"'As few instruments can long hold out against such treatment, he therefore frequently gets a new one, and has indeed three or four in use at the same time. If any of them exhibits the smallest flaw in one of the keys or joinings, then, with a 'God d—n me, it is only in England that musical instruments can be made!' he throws it out of the window.

"'What is worst of all, however, is, that this passion for blowing the flute of his, seizes him in the night, and he then never fails to diddle all my guests out of their first sleep.

"'Could you believe it, however, that there is in our town another foreigner, an Englishman, by name Doctor Green, who has been in the house of the *Amtmann* about as long as Mr Ewson has lived with me, and that the one is just as absurd an original as the other? These two are constantly quarrelling, and yet without each other could not live. It has just now occurred to me that Mr Ewson has, for this evening, ordered a bowl of punch at my house, to which he has invited Doctor Green. If, sir, you choose to stay here till to-morrow, you will see the most absurd trio that this whole world could afford.'

Chapter XXVIII

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"Your highness will readily conclude," continued the physician, "that I was very willing on this account to delay my journey, as I had thereby an opportunity of seeing Mr Ewson in his glory. As soon as the morning drew on, he came into my room, and was so good as to invite me to his bowl of punch, although he regretted that he could only give me that contemptible drink which, in this country, bore the honoured name of a far different liquor. It was only in England where good punch could be drunk, and if ever I came to see him in his own country, he would convince me that he knew how to prepare, in its best fashion, that divine panacea.

"Not long afterwards, the two other guests whom he had invited, made their appearance. The *Amtmann* was, like Ewson, a little figure, but round as a ball, happy and contented, with a red snub nose, and large sparkling eyes. Dr Green, on the contrary, was a tall, powerful, and middle-aged man, with a countenance strikingly national, carelessly, yet fashionably dressed, spectacles on his nose, and a round white hat on his head.

"'Give me sack, that mine eyes may be red,' cried this hero, (marching up to the innkeeper, whom he seized by the breast, shaking him heartily,) 'Speak, thou rascally Cambyses, where are the princesses? There is here a base odour of coffee and Bremen cigars, but no fumigation yet floats on the air from the ambrosial drink of the gods.'

"'Have mercy, oh champion! Away with thy hands—relax thy potent grasp,' answered the host, coughing; 'otherwise, in thine ire, thou might'st crush my ribs like an eggshell."

"'Not till thy duties are fulfilled,' replied Dr Green; 'not before the sweet vapour of punch, ambrosial punch, delights our nostrils. Why are thy functions thus delayed? Not till then shall I let thee go, thou most unrighteous host!'

"Now, however, Ewson darted out ferociously against the Doctor, crying, 'Green, thou brute, thou rascal!—Green shalt thou be, beneath the eyes,—nay, thou shalt be green and yellow with grief, if thou dost not immediately desist from thy shameful deeds.'

"Accordingly, I expected a violent quarrel, and prepared myself for departure; but I was for once mistaken. 'In contempt, then, of his cowardly impotence, I shall desist,' said the Doctor, 'and wait patiently for the divine drink which thou, Ewson, shalt prepare for us.'

"With these words he let go the innkeeper, (who instantly ran out of the room,) seated himself, with the demeanour of a Cato, at the table, lighted his pipe, which was ready filled, and blew out great volumes of smoke.

"'Is not all this as if one were at the play?' said the good-humoured *Amtmann*, addressing himself to me. 'The Doctor, who generally never reads a German book, borrowed from us a volume of Schlegel's Shakespeare, and since that time he has, according to his own expression, never ceased playing old well-known tunes upon a strange instrument. You must have observed, that even the innkeeper speaks in measured verse, the Doctor having drilled him for that purpose.'

"He was interrupted by the appearance of the landlord with his punch-bowl, ready filled with liquor, smoking hot; and although Green and Ewson both swore that it was scarcely drinkable, yet they did not fail to swallow glass after glass with the greatest expedition.

"We kept up a tolerable conversation. Green, however, remained very silent, only now and then falling in with most comical contradictions of what other people had said. Thus, for example, the *Amtmann* spoke of the theatre at Berlin, and I assured him that the tragedy hero played admirably. 'That I cannot admit,' said Dr Green. 'Do you not think if the actor had performed six times better, that he might have been tolerable?' Of necessity I could not but answer in the affirmative, but was of opinion, that to play six times better would cost him a deal of unnecessary trouble, as he had already played the part of Lear (in which I had already seen him) most movingly. 'This,' said Green, 'quite passes the bounds of my perceptions. The man, indeed, gives us all that he has to give. Can he help it, if he is by nature and destiny inclined to be stupid? However, in his own way, he has brought the art to tolerable perfection; therefore one must bear with him.'

"The *Amtmann* sat between the two originals, exerting his own particular talent, which was, like that of a demon, to excite them to all sorts of folly; and thus the night wore on, till the powerful ambrosia began to operate.

"At last Ewson became extravagantly merry. With a hoarse, croaking voice, he sung divers national songs, of which I did not understand a word; but if the words were like the music, they must have been every way detestable. Moreover, he threw his periwig and coat through the window into the court, and began to dance a hornpipe, with such unutterable grimaces, and in a style so supernaturally grotesque, that I had almost split my sides with laughing.

"The Doctor, meanwhile, remained obstinately solemn, but it was obvious that the strangest visions were passing through his brain. He looked upon the punch-bowl as a bass fiddle, and would not give over playing upon it with the spoon, to accompany Ewson's songs, though the innkeeper earnestly entreated of him to desist.

"As for the *Amtmann*, he had always become more and more quiet; at last he tottered away into a corner of the room, where he took a chair, and began to weep bitterly. I understood a signal of the innkeeper, and inquired of this

dignitary the cause of his deep sorrow. 'Alas! alas!' said he, 'the Prince Eugene was a great, very great general, and yet even he, that heroic prince, was under the necessity to die!' Thereupon he wept more vehemently, so that the tears ran down his cheeks.

"I endeavoured as well as I could to console him for the loss of this brave hero of the last century, but in vain.

"Dr Green, meanwhile, had seized a great pair of snuffers, and with all his might drove and laboured with them towards the open window. He had nothing less in view than to clip the moon, which he had mistaken for a candle.

"Ewson, meanwhile, danced and yelled as if he were possessed by a thousand devils, till at last the under-waiter came, with a great lantern, notwithstanding the clear moonlight shone into the apartment, and cried out, 'Here I am, gentlemen. Now you can march.'

"The Doctor arose, lighted his pipe, (which he had laid aside while the enjoyments of the punch-bowl lasted,) and now placed himself right opposite to the waiter, blowing great clouds into his face.

"'Welcome, friend,' cried he; 'Art thou Peter Quince, who bearest about moonshine, and dog, and thorn-bush? 'Tis I that have trimmed your light for you, you lubber, and therefore you shine so brightly!

"'Good night then! Much have I quaffed of the contemptible juice here denominated ambrosial punch. Good night, mine honest host—Good night, mine Pylades!'

"Ewson swore that he would instantly break the head of any one who should offer to go home, but no one heeded him. On the contrary, the waiter took the Doctor under one arm, and the *Amtmann*, still weeping for Prince Eugene, under the other; and thus they reeled along through the streets, towards the *Amthaus*.

"With considerable difficulty, we carried the delirious Ewson to his own room, where he raged and blew for half the night on his flute, so that I could not possibly obtain any rest; nor did I recover from the influences of the mad evening, until I found myself once more in my travelling carriage."

The physician's story was (more, perhaps, from the *naive* quaintness of his delivery, than the *materiel* of his narrative,) interrupted frequently by peals of laughter, louder and longer than are usually to be heard in a court circle. The Prince himself appeared particularly delighted.

"There is only one figure," said his highness, "which, in the punch-bowl scene, you have kept too much in the back-ground, and that is your own—for I am fully persuaded, that you must have been the means of leading the Doctor and Ewson to a thousand extravagancies, and that you were, in truth, the exciting principle of mischief, for which you would have us take the poor devil of an *Amtmann*."

"I assure your highness," said the Doctor, "that the club was, on the contrary, so rounded and complete in itself, that every addition would have been both discordant and superfluous. The three originals were tuned up, and adapted, one to the other, each on his proper key, so as to produce a most perfect trio. The host added thereto what we musicians call a *septime*."

In this manner the conversations and the readings were kept up till the hour when the Prince's family retired to their private apartments, after which the numerous assembly all separated in the greatest good humour.

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I now found myself, day after day, moving happily and cheerfully in a world entirely new. But the more that I learned to accommodate myself to the quiet pleasant mode of life in the town, and at the court, the less I thought of the past, or troubled myself with reflections that my situation here was held by a very frail tenure. A place was gradually opened for me, which I could hold with honour and credit. The Prince seemed to take particular pleasure in my society, and from various hints, I could very easily perceive that he thought of retaining me permanently at his court.

It was not to be denied, that to many individuals the restraint imposed by the constant presence of the sovereign, and the necessity of accommodating one's pursuits and opinions to those which prevailed at court, might have been very disagreeable. But here I possessed the peculiar advantage of having been already accustomed to the formal restrained life of the convent; so that I suffered less than any other stranger would have done.

One circumstance, however, was exceedingly irksome to me. I perceived that, although the Prince always distinguished me by the most unequivocal tokens of his favour, yet the Princess invariably remained, in her manner towards me, cold, haughty, and reserved. Nay, my presence seemed often to disquiet her in an extraordinary degree, and it seemed to cost her a great effort to bestow on me now and then, for form's sake, a few words of ordinary politeness.

With the ladies, however, by whom she was surrounded, I had better fortune. My appearance seemed to have made on them a favourable impression; and as I was often with them, I succeeded at last in acquiring the arts of gallantry, that is to say, of accommodating myself to the notions of the ladies, whoever they were, among whom I happened to be thrown, and of talking on subjects, in themselves trifling and contemptible, as if they were of some importance.

Is not this oftentimes a key to the female heart? It is not difficult to possess one's self of the ideas that usually prevail there, and if these ideas, commonly not very deep nor sublime, are repeated and embellished by the eloquence of a handsome lover, is not this far better than downright flattery? It sounds, indeed, to female ears, like a hymn of self-adoration. The beauty, hearing her own slender ideas thus improved, is as delighted as if she beheld herself (dressed with elegance and splendour) in a mirror.

I was satisfied that my transformation was complete. Who could now have recognised in me the monk Medardus? The only dangerous place for me now was the church, where I could scarcely avoid mechanically betraying the force of old habits.

Among the constant hangers-on of the court, the physician was almost the only one, except myself, who seemed to have any decided character of his own. He was, therefore, partial to me, and approved highly the boldness of my expressions, by which I had strangely succeeded in banishing from the Prince's parties, the pleasures of the pharo-table.

It thus happened that we were often together, and spoke now of literature and the arts—now of the goings on of those that were around us. For the Princess, the physician had, like myself, a high veneration; and assured me, that it was only through her influence that the Prince was restrained from many other follies. It was this only that could charm away that kind of restless *ennui* by which he was tormented; and it seemed often as if she were obliged to treat him as a child, and put into his hands some harmless plaything.

I did not lose this opportunity of lamenting that I seemed to be out of favour with the Princess, without being able to explain to myself any cause for it.

The Doctor immediately rose, and, as we happened to be in his room, brought a small miniature picture from his writing-desk, desiring me to examine it with great care. I did so—but how was I confounded when I perceived that the features of the male figure whom it represented were precisely my own! It was only the old fashion of hair-dressing and of garb in the portrait, and the luxuriant whiskers (Belcampo's chef-d'oeuvre) on my part, that presented any difference.

Without hesitation I imparted my astonishment to the physician. "Well, sir," said he, "it is neither more nor less than this resemblance which now terrifies and disquiets the Princess as often as you come into her presence; for your appearance never fails to bring to her mind the recollection of a tremendous adventure, which formerly happened at this court, and which I knew not whether I ought to relate.

"My precursor in the duties of physician, who has been some years dead, and of whom I was a pupil, entrusted me with the particulars of that event, and at the same time gave me this picture, which represents a former favourite in the Prince's family, known here by the name of Francesco. You perceive, by the way, that the miniature itself is a masterpiece of art.

"It is one of the numerous works of that celebrated foreign painter who was then at our court, and became a principal actor in the tragedy to which I have alluded."

On contemplating the picture, my mind was overpowered by confused and stupifying apprehensions, which I vainly endeavoured to arrange into some definite shape. This only was certain, that some mystery, in which I was myself involved, would now be cleared up; and I entreated the physician to

wave his scruples, and acquaint me with the adventure to which he had alluded, as it probably might account to me for the extraordinary likeness between my features and those of Francesco.

"Truly," said the physician, "I cannot wonder at your curiosity being thus awakened; and though I speak very unwillingly of these circumstances, on which, to this day, there lies a veil of mystery which I have never been able to lift up, yet you shall now hear all that I know of the matter. Many years have now passed since that occurrence, and the principal actors have retired altogether from the stage; yet the mere recollection of them is here so hazardous, that I must beg of you not to repeat to any one what I may now communicate."

Of course I promised secrecy, and the physician went on as follows:—

"It happened just at the time of our Prince's marriage, that his brother the Duke of Neuenburg returned from his travels in the society of a man whom he called Francesco, though it was known that he was not an Italian, but by birth a German. They brought with him also a painter, said to have acquired, as an artist, the highest celebrity.

"The Duke of Neuenburg was one of the handsomest men that have ever lived; and, on this account alone, would have outshone our sovereign, even if he had not also excelled him both in vivacity and energy of mind.

"On the young and newly-married Princess, therefore, who was then very lively, and for whose disposition her consort was not very well suited, the Duke made an extraordinary impression. Without the slightest shade of criminal intentions, of any premeditated crime, the parties were gradually and almost unconsciously involved in an attachment, at first more distinguishable to by-standers than to themselves, and from which they would, on *timely* reflection, have fled with terror.

"It was the stranger Francesco alone, who, both in talents and in personal beauty, could be compared to the Duke; and as the Duke interested our reigning Princess, so Francesco completely acquired the affections of her elder sister, who was then an inmate of our court.

"Francesco soon became aware of his good fortune, and did not fail to lay the craftiest plans for profiting by the advantages then put within his power. Meanwhile, although our sovereign was perfectly convinced of his wife's virtue, yet the overstrained attentions of his brother, and the satisfaction with which they were received, gave him considerable vexation, and Francesco alone, who was become a great favourite, was able at certain times to keep him in good humour. On this man he wished to confer some distinguished situation; but the foreigner was contented with the advantages derived from the system of favouritism, and the affection of the Princess's unmarried sister.

"Such was the situation of affairs for some time. No particular event occurred to disturb the family; but it was easy to perceive that some among them were in no enviable state of mind. At this very juncture, by the invitation probably of the Duke, there appeared with great splendour at our court a certain Italian

Countess, to whom, it was said, that, in the course of his travels, he had at one time been greatly attached, and who had even been spoken of as his betrothed bride.

"Be this as it may, she is said to have been wonderfully beautiful, to have concentrated in her person and manners the very *belle ideal* of grace and elegance. Indeed these attributes speak for themselves in her portrait, which you may see in the gallery. Her presence at first greatly enlivened the court, where a kind of languor had begun to predominate. She outshone every lady, even the Royal Princesses not excepted.

"Francesco, however, after the arrival of this Italian beauty, became most unfavourably changed. It seemed as if he were preyed upon by some inward grief, which wore away the fresh bloom that had been formerly on his features. Moreover, he became peevish, reserved, and melancholy. He neglected even the society of his noble mistress, to whom he had before shewn such obsequious attention.

"After some time, too, the Duke became morose and meditative, seemingly carried away by some new passion, which he was unable to resist. But, above all, it was on Francesco's mistress, the unmarried Princess, that the strange lady's arrival had the most painful influence. Being naturally inclined to enthusiasm, and to feel in extremes, it seemed to her, that with the loss of Francesco's love, all the hopes and joys of this life were, for her, withered for ever.

"Amid these dark clouds of disappointment and melancholy, by which all were more or less affected, the Duke was the first to recover an outward show of cheerfulness. That his attentions formerly to the reigning Princess had been perfectly innocent, there can be no doubt; but these were now changed for a vehement revival of his old attachment to the Italian Countess, so that he lay once more under the same fetters, which, but a short time before he came hither, he had successfully broken!

"The more that the Duke gave himself to this passion, the more remarkable for gloom and discontent was the behaviour of Francesco, who now scarcely ever made his appearance at court, but wandered about through the country alone, and was often for weeks together absent from the *residenz*.

"On the other hand, the painter, who, as I have mentioned before, had also accompanied the Duke from Italy, and who at first had been so shy and reserved, that he was almost invisible, now made his appearance very frequently in society, and laboured with great success and industry in a large room, which the Italian Countess had fitted up for him in her house, and where he took many portraits of her and of others, with matchless fidelity and strength of expression.

"To the reigning Princess, meanwhile, he seemed to cherish a decided aversion. He absolutely refused to paint her portrait, while, at the same time, of her unmarried sister he took a most perfect likeness, without her having allowed him a single sitting. Many other strange stories are told of this painter's capricious and unaccountable conduct, which I do not think it

necessary to detail. Suffice it to say, that though for the most part employed sedulously in his own profession, he seemed to be utterly careless of what others said or thought of his productions. One day, however, when the Duke had made some remarks which did not suit with the stranger's particular humour, an irreconcilable and violent quarrel took place betwixt them; and the artist only requested, that, before retiring from the court, he might be allowed to bestow some finishing touches on a favourite picture of the Italian lady, which he was then painting for his patron. This being agreed to, by two or three masterly strokes of his pencil, he converted in a few seconds the countenance which had been so beautiful, into the most hideous monster of deformity, on which no one could bear to look. Then, with the words, 'Now art thou for ever lost,' he slowly and solemnly left the apartment.

"This happened when the Italian Princess was already become the betrothed bride of the Duke, and the marriage was appointed to take place in a few days. As to the painter's strange conduct, less notice was taken of it, as he was, by prevalent report, liable frequently to madness. He returned, as it was said, to his own small and confined apartments, where he sat staring at a great piece of stretched canvass, without, as the by-standers believed, making any progress, though he himself said that he was engaged on magnificent works. So he completely forgot his attendance at court, and was himself forgotten.

"The marriage of the Duke with the Italian lady, was solemnly celebrated in the palace. The reigning Princess had, of course, accommodated herself to circumstances, and if she really loved her brother-in-law, had renounced a passion which was without legitimate object, and which never could have been gratified.

"Her unmarried sister once more seemed in high spirits, for her lover, Francesco, now re-appeared at court, more blooming and joyous than ever.

"The Duke, with his consent, was to inhabit a wing of the palace, which our Sovereign had ordered to be prepared for them. The Prince was, indeed, at that time, quite in his element. He was never visible, without a crowd of architects, painters, and upholsterers around him, turning over great books, and spreading out on the table plans, sketches, and outlines, which he partly devised himself; and which, among them all, turned out sufficiently incommodious and absurd.

"Neither the Duke nor his bride was allowed to see any of these arrangements, till on the eve of their marriage-day, when they were led by the Prince, in a long solemn procession, into the rooms, which were really decorated with great splendour; and on the evening of that day, the festivities were concluded by a ball, given in the great banquet *salle*, which was made to resemble a blooming garden.

"The nuptials were regularly solemnized on the following day; and all was conducted as usual on such occasions; till about midnight, when, from the Duke's wing of the house, there was heard a strange disturbance, of which the noise became always louder and louder, till it reached our Sovereign's ears, who, in great alarm, started from his bed.

"Having dressed himself hastily, and attended by his guards, he reached the distant corridor of his brother's apartments, just as the servants were lifting up the dead body of the Duke, who had been found murdered, and lying at the door of the bridal chamber!

"I make the narrative as short as possible. It is easier to conceive than describe the horror of the sovereign, the affliction of his consort, and the whole court.

"Of course, the first inquiries of the Prince were, how and by whom the murder had been committed? Watches were placed in all the corridors. How, therefore, was it possible, that an assassin could have got admittance, or how could he escape if he had once got in? All the private passages were searched, but in vain!

"The page who usually waited on the Duke, related that he had assisted his master to undress, who was for a long while agitated by fearful and undefinable apprehensions, and had walked up and down, greatly disquieted, in his dressing-room, then, carrying a large wax candle, he had accompanied him to the anti-room of the bridal chamber. The Duke had there taken the light out of his hand, and sent him away.

"Scarcely was he out of the anti-room, when he heard a hollow stifled cry, the noise of a heavy fall, and the rattling of the overthrown candlestick. He then ran directly back, and, by the gleam of a lamp, which still burned, beheld the Duke stretched, dying or dead, before the door of the bridal chamber, and near him he saw lying a small bloody stiletto. Thereupon he directly gave the alarm.

"On the other hand, the Italian Duchess gave a totally different, and quite inexplicable account. She said, that directly after her maids had left her, the Duke had hastily come into her room without a light, and had directly put out the other lights, so that the apartment was left in darkness. He had remained with her a good half-hour, and had then risen and departed. According to her statement, it must have been only a few minutes after this that the murder was perpetrated.

"In short, people wore themselves out with conjectures as to who could have been the murderer, while not a single trace of him was to be obtained. But at this juncture, there stepped forward a certain waiting-maid of the Princess's unmarried sister, who had been accidentally and privately a witness of the scene between the Duke and the painter, when the portrait was destroyed. After hearing her opinion and evidence, no one doubted that the painter was the man who had found his way secretly into the palace, and become the murderer.

"Orders were of course given to arrest this man; but ere the waiting-maid's evidence was given, he had found time to escape, and not the slightest tidings of him were to be found.

Chapter XXIX

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"After this horrible tragedy," continued the physician, "the court remained sunk in the profoundest melancholy, which was shared by all the inhabitants of the town; and it was only Francesco, (whose attachment continued unabated to the unmarried Princess,) who still seemed cheerful, and, by sympathy, spread a gleam of satisfaction through the otherwise melancholy circles.

"I have stated only such facts as I can vouch for on my own knowledge. As to the conjectures and rumours that were now abroad, they were, of course, many and various, and, especially, a strange story was told of some individual, who, on the marriage night, had played, in the dark, the part of the bridegroom.

"Be that as it may, the Italian Countess afterwards retired to a distant castle belonging to our Prince; and as to her mode of life there, it was kept entirely secret, all that was made known being that her extreme grief had disgusted her with the world.

"Notwithstanding the influence of this horrible misfortune, Francesco's intercourse with the sister of our reigning Princess became always more and more intimate, and the friendship of this Sovereign towards him more publicly confirmed. The mystery, whatever it was, that hung over this man's birth and fortunes, had now been fully explained to him; and at last, after many consultations and entreaties, he agreed to a private marriage between Francesco and his sister-in-law. The former was to be raised to a high rank in the army, under another government, where our Prince had influence; and not till that event took place, was his marriage to be made public.

"The day of the solemnization arrived. The Prince and Princess, with two other confidential witnesses, of whom my predecessor was one, were the only persons present at this occasion. One page, who was also in the secret, kept watch at the chapel-door.

"The couple were kneeling before the altar. The Prince's confessor, a venerable old man, after an appropriate prayer and lecture, began the ceremony, when, to the astonishment of every one, Francesco grew suddenly pale as marble, staring at some object which as yet none but himself beheld. 'What would'st thou have?' cried he, in a deep hollow voice, and letting go his bride's hand.

"Following the direction of his looks, they now observed, leaning against a pillar of the church, in his Italian dress, with a dark violet-coloured mantle drawn closely round him—the painter! He continued to fix his dark glaring

eyes on Francesco, who seemed transfixed with some inexplicable apprehension.

"The Princess nearly fainted, and every one but the priest was too much astonished to speak—'Why should the figure of this man affright you?' said he, to Francesco. 'It is true that his presence here was unexpected; but if your own conscience is at rest, wherefore should you tremble before him?'

"Then Francesco, who had till now kept this kneeling posture at the altar, started up, and, with a small stiletto in his hand, rushed towards the painter. But before he reached him, he himself fell, with a frightful cry, to the ground, and in the same moment the painter vanished behind the pillar.

"The marriage ceremony, of course, was thought of no more. All started up as from a dream, and ran to the help of Francesco, who had fainted, and lay on the ground as if dead. To avoid risk of publicity, the two witnesses, with the page's help, carried him into the Prince's apartments. When he recovered from his faint, he demanded vehemently that he should be conveyed to his own lodgings, and left there alone. To the Prince's questions as to his strange conduct in the church, he would make no answer whatever.

"On the following morning, Francesco had fled from the *residenz*, taking with him all the valuables which the favour of the late Duke, and of our Sovereign, had bestowed upon him. The latter used every possible means to unravel these mysteries, and, above all, to explain the ghostly apparition of the painter. The chapel had only two entrances, of which one led from the rooms of the palace to the seats near the high altar; the other, from the great corridor into the aisle of the chapel. This last entrance had been watched by the page, in order that no prying observer should gain admittance. The other had been carefully closed, so that it remained inexplicable both how the painter appeared in, and vanished from, the chapel.

"Another circumstance very remarkable was noticed by the page. This person had been the confidential attendant of the late Duke, and he declared himself convinced, that the stiletto which Francesco had continued to grasp convulsively during his faint, was the same which he had seen lying by the body of his master on that fatal evening, and which had soon afterwards been unaccountably lost.

"Not long after Francesco's flight, news came of the Italian Duchess. On the very day when the former should have been married, she had been delivered of a son, and soon after her accouchement had died. The Prince deplored her untimely fate, though the circumstances of the bridal-night had weighed so heavily on her, that her future life must, of necessity, have been unhappy. Nor were there wanting individuals malicious enough to raise against her evil rumours and suspicions. Her son never appeared here, but was educated in distant countries, under the Italian title of Count Victorin.

"The Princess—I mean the sister-in-law of our Sovereign—being reduced to utter despair by these horrid events following like links of a chain so closely on one another, determined on devoting the rest of her life to the cloister. She is, as you already know, Abbess of the Cistertian Convent at Kreuzberg.

"But, between these adventures which happened in our court, there has lately been traced a wonderful, and almost supernatural coincidence, with others which occurred very lately at the castle of the Baron von F—, in the Thuringian mountains, and by which his house was thrown precisely into the same state of distraction and misery under which ours had suffered. You must know that the Abbess, who had been moved with the distress of a poor woman with a child in her arms, who came to her from a pilgrimage to the Convent of the Lime-Tree"—

Here the entrance of a visitor put an end to the physician's narrative; and hastily taking my leave, I succeeded tolerably well in concealing the tempest of emotions which now raged within me.

Scarcely a doubt remained on my mind that Francesco had been my father. He had murdered the Duke with the identical stiletto with which, in self-defence, I had afterwards killed Hermogen! Here, then, was the origin of that hereditary guilt, of which the darkening clouds hung like a curse upon my existence, and which it should have been my earnest endeavour to expiate, by a life of voluntary suffering, of penance, and exemplary piety.

Hence, therefore, I resolved instantly to follow the Prior's injunctions, and betake myself to Italy; thus breaking out at once from that dangerous circle into which I had been seduced by the malicious powers of darkness.

On that very evening, however, I had been engaged to a party at court, and went accordingly. The assembly was as numerous and varied as that which I have described on a former occasion; but, through them all, there prevailed *one only* subject of conversation, viz. the extraordinary beauty of a young lady who had arrived only the day preceding at our court, and had been appointed one of the maids of honour to the Princess.

At last the folding-doors were thrown open, the Princess, as usual, stepped in, but not with her usual attendant. The stranger was with her, and in that stranger I recognized at once—AURELIA!!

VOLUME II

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Chapter I

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Who is there, over the wide world, who has not, at one period or another, in a more or less degree, felt the mysterious influences of love?—Whoever thou art, then, courteous reader, who shalt, after the lapse of years, turn over these papers, recall, I beseech you, to recollection that noontide interval of dazzling brightness—contemplate once more that beautiful image, which came, like an impersonization of the abstract spirit of love, from divine regions, to meet you.

At that time, it was through her,—through her alone, that thou seemed'st assured of thine own existence! Canst thou not yet remember, how the rushing streams, the waving trees, and the balmy winds of evening, spoke to thee, in articulate and intelligible accents, of her, and of the prevailing passion which possessed thy whole heart and soul?—Canst thou yet behold how the flowers unfolded their bright beaming eyes, bearing to thine from her kisses and salutation?

Yet, suppose that she herself had actually come—that she vowed to be thine, and thine only—to live for thee alone—then didst thou fold her in thy embraces, and it seemed as if Heaven opened its eternal realms to receive you—as if thou could'st raise thyself with her above all the petty sorrows or enjoyments of this every-day and earthly sphere. Yet scarcely hadst thou formed such hopes ere she was lost! The bland illusion was broken. No longer could'st thou hear the music of her celestial voice; and only the sorrowful complaints of the despairing and forsaken lover sounded amid the desolate loneliness!

If then, reader, to me unknown!—if thou hast ever been persecuted by such a destiny, join, then, and sympathize with the grief of the penitent monk, who, recollecting still the sunny gleams of his youthful attachment, weeps on his hard couch, and whose fearful groans reverberate, in the stillness of night, through the gloomy aisles of the convent!—But thou, too, in spirit to me related, doubtless wilt concur in my belief, that it is not till *after death*, that the mysterious gifts and enjoyments of this passion can be obtained and fulfilled! This truth is, indeed, announced to us by many a hollow prophesying voice, which rises on our ears from the immeasurable depths of eternity; and as in those rites, celebrated by our earliest ancestors, (the children of nature,) death appears also to us the high festival of love!

I have said before, that my leading object in these pages was rapid, concise narrative, without any attempt at description. But of my emotions on meeting Aurelia, that evening, in the palace, no words could, however skilfully laboured, convey any adequate impression. I was struck as if with a thundershock. My breast heaved—my heart beat convulsively—and every

pulse and vein throbbed almost audibly.

"To *her*!—to *her*!"—It seemed as if an over-powering impulse would force me to thrust aside the contemptible mob of insipid worldlings—of every-day flatterers, scarcely possessed of one rational idea, by whom she was surrounded—to crush, like webs of gossamer, those despicable barriers, and snatch her to my arms, in all the wild frenzy of undisguised passion! Methought I could have exclaimed aloud—"What, unhappy girl, dost thou strive against? With that supernatural power, which has irresistibly and unalterably chained thee to me?—Am I not thy fate, and art thou not indeed mine for ever?"

Yet notwithstanding these emotions, I contrived, far better than formerly, at the Baron's castle, to conceal from the bystanders my agitation. Besides, the eyes of all were directed to Aurelia; and thus, in a circle of people, who to my concerns were perfectly indifferent, I contrived to move about, without being particularly remarked or spoken to, which to me would have been intolerable, as I could but see, hear, and think of her alone.

Let no one insist that a truly beautiful girl appears to most advantage in a homely household dress. On the contrary, the beauty of woman, like that of flowers in a parterre, is then most attractive and irresistible when they are arrayed in their fullest pomp and magnificence. Say, then, oh lover! to whom I have before addressed myself, when thou for the first time beholdest the empress of thy heart—who had before worn a simple garb, now attired with splendour and gleaming, the *cynosure* of a brilliant party—did not a new and nameless rapture vibrate through every nerve and vein? She would appear to you indeed so strange! but this, joined to the knowledge that she was in reality *the same*, heightened the charms by which thy soul was wholly subjected. What unspeakable pleasure, if thou could'st, by stealth, seize and press her hand in the crowd, and say to thyself, she, who is here the magnet of all eyes, is mine by indissoluble bonds, and lives for me alone!

Thus I beheld Aurelia on that evening dressed with becoming splendour for her first introduction at court. Then the spirit of evil once more became powerful within me, and lifted up his internal voice, to which I now bent a willing ear—"Seest thou not now, Medardus," it began, "how thou triumph'st over all the conditional laws and limitations of this life—how Destiny now submits herself to thy will, and only knots more firmly the threads which thou thyself hadst spun?"

There were many other women at court who might well have passed for beautiful, but before the dazzling charms of Aurelia, they faded away into utter insignificance. A kind of inspiration now seemed to take possession of the most insipid and common-place characters. Even the old courtiers gave up their usual strain of unmeaning talk, and visibly exerted themselves, in order to appear to the best advantage in the eyes of the beautiful stranger.

Aurelia received all this homage with looks fixed on the ground, and with deep blushes; but now, when the Prince assembled the elder courtiers about himself, and many a handsome youth timidly and respectfully drew near her, she began, by degrees, to lose her embarrassment, and to seem more cheerful.

There was, in particular, a certain Major of the *garde d'honneur*, who succeeded in attracting a good deal of her attention, so that she at last appeared occupied with him in lively discourse. I knew this Major to be a decided favourite of the female sex; with a fine ear, he could catch even the very tone, sentiment, and voice of the person whom he addressed, so that the deceived listener seemed to hear a miraculous anticipation of her own thoughts—a chord struck in perfect unison. I now stood not far from Aurelia, who appeared to take no notice of me. Many times I was on the point of going up to her, but, as if bound by iron fetters, I could not move from the spot on which I stood. The bitterness of envy and jealousy possessed my heart. At last, as I steadfastly gazed on Aurelia and her fortunate companion, methought that the Major's features were changed into those of Victorin!

As if actuated by some demon, I wholly lost all self-possession. In a convulsed tone of bitter scorn and mockery, I laughed aloud—"Ha, ha, ha!—Thou *revenant*!—Thou cursed libertine!" cried I, "has thy bed then, in the devil's abyss, been so downy, that, in frenzied passion, thou darest aspire to the chosen paramour of the Monk?"

I know not if I actually uttered these words, but I heard myself laugh, and started up as from a dream, when the old Court-Marshal, taking my arm, gently inquired, "What makes you so merry, Mr Leonard?" An ice-cold shuddering passed over my whole frame.

Were not these the identical words of the pious brother Cyrillus, when, at the time of my investiture, he remarked my sinful laughter?—Scarcely was I able to utter some incoherent nonsense in reply—I felt conscious that Aurelia was no longer near to me, but did not venture to look up to see what had become of her. Instinctively, I resolved to make my escape, and ran with my utmost speed through the illuminated apartments. Doubtless, my appearance was in the utmost degree disordered, for I remarked how every one cleared the way for me as if seized with horror and affright. At length, I arrived at the outer-door, and leapt headlong rather than ran down the broad marble staircase.

Henceforward I completely avoided the court; for to see Aurelia again, without betraying the mystery which it was my interest to conceal, seemed to me impossible. Abandoned to my own reveries, I ran through the fields and woods, thinking of her, and beholding her alone. My conviction always became more certain that some mysterious destiny bound up her fate indissolubly with mine, and that my pursuit of her, which had many times appeared to me as an unpardonable crime, was but the fulfilment of an eternal and unalterable decree.

Thus encouraging myself, I laughed at the danger which now threatened me, if Aurelia should recognize in me the murderer of Hermogen! Besides, this appeared to me very improbable; and, meanwhile, the attentions of those fluttering youths who laboured to win for themselves the good graces of her who was altogether and exclusively mine, filled me with the utmost scorn and contempt for their endeavours.

"What," said I, "are to me these Counts, Freyherrs, Chamberlains, and military officers, in their motley coats bedaubed with lace, and hung with orders? What are they more than gaudy impertinent insects, which, if they became troublesome, I could with one blow crush to annihilation?"

Reflecting on the chapel adventure of the Cistertian Convent, it seemed to me as if, robed in my capuchin tunic, I could step in among them with Aurelia, habited like a bride, in my arms, and that this proud and haughty Princess should be forced even to sanction the marriage, and prepare the bridal festival for that conquering and triumphant monk, whom she now so much despised. Labouring with such thoughts, I frequently pronounced aloud, and unconsciously, the name of Aurelia; and, as before in the Capuchin Convent, laughed and howled like a madman!

But, ere long, this tempest was laid, and I began quietly to take counsel with myself in what manner I was now to act. Thus I was one morning gliding through the park, considering whether it would be prudent for me to attend another evening party at court, which had been announced to me, when some one touched me on the shoulder. It was the physician.

To my great surprise, after the usual salutations, he looked steadfastly in my face, took hold of my arm, and requested that I would allow him to feel my pulse. "What's the meaning of all this?" cried I, with some impatience. —"Nay," said he, "there is a sort of madness going about here, that seizes all at once upon honest Christian people, and makes them utter tremendous noises, though some will have it that the said noises are nothing more than very immoderate laughter. At the same time, this may be all a misconception; this devil of madness may be only a slight fever, with heat in the blood; therefore I beg of you, sir, allow me to feel your pulse."

"I assure you, sir," said I, "that I am well, and by no means understand the drift of this discourse." The physician, however, had kept hold of my arm, and now taking out his watch, counted my pulse with great precision. His conduct, indeed, puzzled me completely, and I entreated of him to explain himself.

"Do you not know, then, Mr Leonard," replied he, "that your behaviour has lately brought the whole court into the utmost confusion and consternation? Since that time, the lady of the upper Chamberlain has been almost perpetually in hysterics; and the President of the Consistorial Court has been obliged to put off hearing the weightiest causes, because it was your pleasure to tramp with all your might upon his gouty toes; so that, now confined to his arm-chair, he sits at home roaring and cursing most notably. This happened when you were running out of the hall, after you had laughed in such a demoniacal tone without any perceptible reason, that all were seized with the utmost horror."

At that moment I thought of the Court-Marshal, and said that I indeed recollected having laughed in that sudden manner, but that my conduct surely could not have been attended by such consequences, as the Marshal had only asked me, with great coolness, "Why I was so merry?"

"Nay, nay," answered the physician, "that will not prove much—The Marshal is such a *homo impavidus*, that the very devil himself could scarcely put him out of his way—He retained his ordinary placidity of manner, but the Consistorial President, on the other hand, was exceedingly disturbed in mind as well as in body, and maintained seriously, that none but the devil could have laughed in such a style.—But what is worst of all, our beautiful Aurelia was seized with such excessive terror, that all the efforts of the family to quiet her were in vain,—and she was soon obliged to retire, to the utter despair of the company. At the moment too, when you, Mr Leonard, so charmingly laughed, the Baroness Aurelia is said to have shrieked out the name, "Hermogen!" Now what may be the meaning of all this?—You are generally a pleasant, lively, and prudent man, Mr Leonard, and I cannot regret having confided to you the story of Francesco, which, if all suggestions be true, must be to you particularly intelligible and instructive!"

During this discourse, the physician had continued to hold my arm, and to gaze steadfastly in my face. Tired of this restraint, I disengaged myself with some roughness—and answered—"I really know not how to interpret all this discourse of yours, sir; but I must confess, that when I saw the beautiful Aurelia surrounded by that tribe of conceited young gentry, a very bitter remembrance from my early life was called up in my mind; and that, seized with a kind of angry scorn at the behaviour of such empty-brained coxcombs, I forgot in whose presence I was, and laughed aloud in a manner that would only have been warrantable when I was alone. I am truly sorry that I have unintentionally brought about so much mischief; but I have done penance on that score, having for some time denied myself the pleasure of being at court. I hope that the Prince's family and the Baroness Aurelia will excuse me."

"Alas! dear Mr Leonard," said the Doctor, "one is indeed subject to strange attacks and varieties of mind, which we might yet easily resist, if we were but pure in heart, and quiet in conscience."

"Who is there," said I vehemently, "on this earthly sphere, that may boast of being so?"—The physician suddenly changed his looks and tone. Mildly and seriously he said—"Mr Leonard, you appear to me to be really and truly sick: your looks are pale and disordered—your eyes are sunk, and gleam with a strange kind of fire—your pulse, too, is feverish, and your voice sounds strangely.—Shall I prescribe something for you?"

"Poison!" answered I, in a kind of hollow whisper.—"Ho, ho," said the physician, "does it stand thus with you?—Nay, nay, instead of poison, rather the tranquillizing and sedative remedy of pleasant society, and moderate dissipation. It may, however, be, that"—(hesitating)—"It is wonderful indeed, but—"

"I must beg of you, sir," said I, now quite angry, "not to torment me in that manner by your broken hints, but at once to speak out."

"Hold!" answered the Doctor. "Not so fast, Mr Leonard—yonder comes the Princess—there are in this world the strangest delusions, and for my part, I feel almost a conviction that people have here built up an hypothesis which a

few minutes' explanation will dissolve into nothing. Yonder, as I said, comes the Princess with Aurelia.—Do you make use of this accidental rencontre. Offer your own excuses for your behaviour. Properly, indeed, your only crime is, that you have laughed—in an extraordinary tone it is true, and rather inopportunely. But who can help it, if people with weak nerves have on that occasion chosen to be so absurdly terrified?—Adieu!"

The physician started away with that vivacity which to him was peculiar.—The Princess and Aurelia were coming down the walk to meet me. I trembled; but with my whole strength laboured to regain composure, for after the mysterious discourse of the physician, I felt that it was my duty on the instant to defend my character. Resolutely, therefore, I went forward to meet them; but no sooner had Aurelia fixed her eyes upon me than she became deadly pale, and to my utter astonishment, with a suppressed scream, she fell down in a fainting fit, to the ground. I wished to assist her, but with looks of aversion and horror, the Princess then motioned me away, at the same time calling loudly for help!

Chapter II

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As if hunted by a thousand devils and furies, I ran away homewards through the park—I shut myself up in my lodgings, and gnashing my teeth with rage and despair, threw myself on the bed. Evening came, and then the dark hours of night, and I still lay there obstinately cherishing my grief. At last I heard the outer gate of the house open, and many voices murmuring and whispering confusedly together. Then there was a noise of heavy steps tottering and clattering up the staircase,—and with three hollow knocks on my door, I was commanded to rise and open it in the name of the magistracy. Without clearly comprehending the danger that awaited me, I yet felt an instinctive conviction that I was now for ever lost.

To save myself instantly by flight—This was my only thought, and I flew to the window, tearing open the lattice. This, however, availed me nothing,—for before the house door, I saw a troop of armed men, one of whom directly observed me, and at the same moment, the door of my apartment was burst in —several men immediately stood around me, whom I recognized for officers of police, and who shewed me an order of the Justiciary Court for my immediate imprisonment. Any attempt at resistance would now have been in vain. They led me down stairs, and placed me in a carriage, which stood there ready to receive me, and which immediately drove off rapidly, through the streets.

When arrived at the place which seemed that of my destination, after being led through divers passages and corridors; also up staircases *that staircases were none*, but seemed (having no steps[7]) to be like the side of a mountain; I inquired "Where I was?" I received for answer, "In the prison of the upper castle." In this place, according to information already received on the arrestment of others, I knew that dangerous and treasonable criminals were shut up during the time that their trial was going on, or was in preparation.

My apartment was comfortless and ghastly enough; but, in a little time, my bed and some other furniture were brought, and the gaoler asked if I wanted anything more. To get rid of him, I answered "No;" and at last was left alone. The receding steps through the long-sounding passages, with the opening and shutting of many doors, if I had not known it already, would have sufficiently made me aware that I was in one of the innermost prisons of the fortress.

It was to myself inconceivable, how, during a pretty long drive, I had remained quite quiet, nay, under a kind of stunning and stupefaction of the senses. I beheld all images that passed before me, as if they existed only in the half-effaced colours of a faded picture. Now, too, I did not resign myself to sleep, but to a kind of faint or swoon, paralysing the faculty of clear thought, and yet leaving me awake to the most horrible and fantastic

apprehensions.

When I awoke in the bright light of the morning, I, for the first time, gradually took counsel with myself, and fully recollected all that had happened, and whither I had been brought. As to the room wherein I lay, its inconvenience made less impression on me than it would have done upon another. The vaulted roof, and want of comfort, only reminded me of my cell in the Capuchin Convent; and the chamber would scarcely have appeared to me a prison, if it had not been that the small and only window was strongly barred with iron, and so high, that I could scarcely reach it with my upstretched hands, far less look out from it on the prospect.

Only a narrow sunbeam fell through this high loop-hole; and being anxious to examine the environs of my prison, I drew my bed to the wall under it; over this placed my table, and was just in the act of mounting up, when my gaoler stepped in and seemed very much surprised at my proceedings. He inquired roughly what I was about there; and on receiving for answer, that I only wished, for diversion, to look out at the window, he did not say a word; but, in significant silence, made the bed, the table, and chair, be taken away: after which, having set down my breakfast, he again disappeared.

After about an hour, he came back, accompanied by two other men, and led me through long passages, up stairs and down stairs, till I entered, at last, into an audience-hall of moderate dimensions, where one of the supreme judges awaited me. By his side sat a young man as secretary, to whom he afterwards dictated whatever information he got from me, in answer to his questions. I had to thank the influence of my former station at Court, and the respect with which I had long been treated by all ranks, for the politeness now shewn to me by this judge. However, I was convinced that it could only be suspicions, founded on Aurelia's extraordinary conduct, which had led to my arrestment.

The judge's first demand was, that I should give him a clear and concise account of my former life. Instead of answering directly to this, I begged to know whether I had not, in the first place, a right to know the cause of my sudden imprisonment. He told me that I should, in due time, have information of the crimes with which I was charged; but that, meanwhile, it was of the utmost importance that he should learn the exact course of my life up to that day when I first arrived at the *residenz*; and he must remind me that, as the court possessed ample means to detect the slightest deviation from truth, I should be watchful for my own sake, to avoid any attempt at deception.

This admonishment of the judge (a little spare man, with red hair, staring eyes, and an absurdly croaking voice) was by no means lost upon me. I recollected that I had already ventured to give the name of my birth-place, and some account of my life, to one of the court ladies; and that the story which I had now to weave, must of necessity be such, as to harmonize with that which I had already promulgated. It was also requisite to avoid all marvellous and intricate adventures. Moreover, to lay the scene, as much as possible, in a country so distant, that inquiries into the reality of my references would be tedious and difficult. At that moment too, there came into my remembrance, a young Pole, with whom I had studied in the college at Königswald. I knew the circumstances of his life, and as the safest method

now in my power, resolved to appropriate them as my own. Thus prepared, I set out as follows:—

"My arrestment, no doubt, has arisen from the imputation against me of some heavy crime. For a considerable period, I have lived here under the eye of the Prince, and all the town's-people, and during that time, have been guilty of no crime nor misdemeanour; consequently it must be some stranger lately arrived here who has accused me of a crime formerly committed; and as my conscience assures me that I am completely free from any such guilt, I can only account for what has occurred, by supposing that an unhappy personal resemblance betwixt myself and some person unknown, has led to the mistake.

"However, it seems to me not a little severe, that on account of *suppositions* merely, (for here there can exist nothing more,) I should be thus thrown into prison, and brought like a criminal for examination. But why have I not been confronted at once with my rash, and perhaps malicious accuser? I doubt not that individual will be found at last to be some wicked impostor, or, at best, some misguided fool, who—"

"Softly—softly, Mr Leonard," croaked the judge. "Correct yourself, otherwise your words may strike against some high personage; and, besides, I can assure you, that the individual by whom you, Mr Leonard, have been recognized as—" (here he bit himself in the lip) "is in truth, neither rash nor foolish, but"—(hesitating) "and besides, we have unquestionable intelligence from — in the Thuringian mountains."

Here he named the residence of the Baron von F.; and I perceived immediately the dangers which threatened me. It was obvious that Aurelia had recognized in me the monk, whom she probably looked upon as the murderer of her brother. This monk, however, was Medardus, the preacher of the Capuchin Convent, and as such had been recognized by the Baron's steward Reinhold. The Abbess, however, knew that this Medardus was the son of Francesco, and thus, my resemblance to him, which had so long puzzled the Princess, must now probably have corroborated into certainty the suspicions which the sisters had, no doubt, by letter communicated to each other.

It was possible even, that intelligence had been received from the Capuchin Convent; that I had been carefully watched upon my journey; and that they had unequivocally identified my person with that of Medardus.

All these possibilities came crowding on my recollection, and forced me to perceive the whole hazard of my situation. The judge, while I was occupied in this reverie, still continued to talk on, which was very advantageous, for I had time to repeat to myself the almost unutterable name of the Polish town which I had assigned to the old lady at court as the place of my birth. Scarcely, then, had the judge again repeated his gruff demand, that I would concisely inform him as to my past course of life, than I once more began—

"My proper name is Leonard Krczinski; and I am the only son of a Polish nobleman, who had sold his property, and lived privately in the town of

Kwicziczwo."—

"How—what?" said the judge, endeavouring in vain to pronounce after me either my name, or that of the town to which I had referred. The secretary had no notion how he was to set the words on paper; I was obliged to write down both names myself, and then went on—

"You perceive, sir, how difficult it is for a German tongue to imitate these words of my language, which are so overburdened with consonants, and herein consists the reason why I have chosen to lay aside my surname altogether, and bear only my christian name of Leonard.

"But this is, indeed, the only mystery or singularity which I have to unfold. The rest of my life is the simplest and most ordinary that could be imagined. My father, who was himself a man of good education, approved of my decided propensity to literature and the arts, and just before his death, had resolved on sending me to Cracow, to live there under the care of a clergyman related to him, by name Stanislaus Krczinski. After that event, being my father's sole heir, I was left the uncontrolled choice of my own actions. I therefore sold the small remnant that was left of a paternal property, called up some debts that were due to my father, and went with the pecuniary proceeds to Cracow, where I studied some years under the guardianship of my relation.

"From thence I travelled to Dantzig and Königsberg; at last I was driven, as if by irresistible impulse, to make a journey towards the south. I trusted that the remainder of my small fortune would be sufficient to carry me through, and that I should at last obtain a fixed situation at some university; but in this town I had probably found my means exhausted, if it had not been that one night's luck at the Prince's pharo-table enabled me to live comfortably for some time, after which I intended to prosecute my journey into Italy.

"As to anything truly remarkable or worthy of being related—no such adventure has ever occurred in my life. Yet perhaps, (here I recollected myself,) I ought not to say this, for I have at least one singular occurrence to record. It would have been quite easy for me to prove exactly the truth of all that I have now deposed, had not a very strange chance deprived me of my *portefeuille*, in which was contained my pass, my journal, and various letters, which would have supplied ample documents for that purpose."

By this conclusion the judge was visibly surprised. It was evidently something unexpected; he fixed his sharp staring eyes upon me, and then, in a tone somewhat ironical, requested me to explain what strange accident had thus unluckily put it out of my power to *prove* (as might have been hoped for) my assertions.

"Some months ago," said I, "I was on my way hither by the road leading through the mountains. The fine season of the year, and the romantic scenery, made me resolve to perform the journey on foot. One day, being much fatigued, I sat in the public room of an inn at a small village. I had there got some refreshments, and had drawn out a leaf from my pocket-book, in order to take a drawing of some old houses that had struck my fancy.

"At this time there arrived at the inn a horseman, whose extraordinary dress and wild looks excited in me much astonishment. He came into the public room obviously striving with much vain effort to look cheerful and unconcerned, took his place opposite to me, and called for drink, casting on me from time to time dark and suspicious glances. The man seemed to me to be half mad, or something worse. I by no means liked such company, and therefore, merely to avoid him, stepped out into the court. Soon afterwards, the stranger also came out, paid the innkeeper, hastily bowed to me, and remounting his horse, rode off at a rapid pace.

"Afterwards, as I was in the act of setting out myself, I remembered my *portefeuille*, which I had left on the table of the public room. I went and found it lying where I had left it, and, in my hurry, believed all was right. It was not till the following day, that, wishing to refer to my pocket-book, I found the *portefeuille* was not mine, but had, in all probability, belonged to the stranger, who must have, by mistake, put up mine into his pocket, and left his own in its place.

"In the latter there was nothing but letters and cards, which to me were unintelligible, addressed to Count Victorin. This *portefeuille*, with the Count's papers, will be found still among my effects. In mine, which was lost, I had, as before mentioned, my pass, my journal, and, as now occurs to me, even my baptism certificate, the production of which would at once have confirmed whatever regarding myself I have alleged."

The judge here desired that I would give him an accurate description, from head to foot, of the stranger's personal appearance. Accordingly, I patched up a skilful composition from the features and dress of the late Count Victorin, and of myself when on my flight from the Baron's castle. To the judge's cross-questioning as to all the minutest circumstances of this meeting, to which there almost seemed no end, I continued to answer as quietly and decisively as possible, till at last the fiction that I had thus invented, rounded itself in such manner in my own mind, that I actually believed all that I had asserted, and ran no risk whatever of falling into contradictions.

Besides, there were other advantages; my first object indeed had only been to justify my possession of these letters of Count Victorin, which would be found in my *portefeuille*; but, by the method that I had chosen to fulfil this purpose, I had luckily raised up an imaginary personage, (one at least who no longer existed in reality,) who might hereafter, as need required, play the part either of the fugitive Medardus, or of the Count Victorin.

Afterwards, it occurred to me also that probably Euphemia's papers must have been examined; that among them there were no doubt letters paving the way for Victorin's plan of appearing as a monk at the castle, and that this would form a fresh nucleus of clouds sufficient to wrap the whole affair in impenetrable mystery.

Thus my internal fantasy continued to work, during the whole time of my examination; and there were always new methods suggesting themselves, by which I might avoid the risk of discovery; so that at last I believed myself

secure against the very worst that could happen.

I now waited in hopes that the judge would have recourse to the criminal accusation which had been entered against me, and concluded that I had said quite enough as to the fortune and adventures of my own past life.

I was mistaken, however, for he seemed as willing to go on with his tiresome questions as if he had but just begun. Among other inquiries, he asked, "For what reason I had formed the wish of escaping out of prison?" I assured him that no such thought had ever entered my mind, and that I had only wished to look out through the window. The gaoler's testimony, however, as to the piled-up bed, chair, and table, seemed here much against me. At last, after a most tedious interview, the judge finally assured me, that if I attempted any prank of that sort again, I must, of necessity, be bound to the ground with iron chains.

Chapter III

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I was then led back to my prison. My bed, as before mentioned, had been removed, and a straw mattress in its stead laid on the ground. The table was firmly screwed down, and, in place of the chair, I found a very low wooden bench.

Many days passed over in dreary captivity, without any farther examination, and without the slightest variety. The time of a prisoner is seldom or never a blank; it is filled up by horrible phantoms and distorted reveries, such as have often been described, though mine probably were of a new character. The detail of them, however, is not within the limits of my present undertaking; I record only simple facts, in the manner of an obtuse old chronicler; and if there be a colouring of imagination, it is not only unsought, but unwelcome and involuntary.

During these three days, I did not behold the features of any living being, except the peevish face of an old sub-janitor, who brought my food, and in the evening lighted my lamp. Hitherto, I had felt like a warrior, who, in a mood of martial excitement, was determined, at all, risks, to meet danger and fight his way to the last; but such passion had now time enough to decline entirely away.

I fell into a dark melancholy trance, during which all things became indifferent. Even the cherished vision of Aurelia had faded, or floated in dim colours before me. But unless I had been in body as much disordered as in mind, this state of apathy could not, of necessity, continue long. In a short time my spirit was again roused, only to feel in all its force the horrid influence of nausea and oppression, which the dense atmosphere of the prison had produced, and against which I vainly endeavoured to contend.

In the night I could no longer sleep. In the strange flickering shadows which the lamp-light threw upon the walls, myriads of distorted visages, one after another, or hundreds at a time, seemed to be grinning out upon me. To avoid this annoyance, I extinguished my lamp, and drew the upper mattress over my head—but in vain! It was now dark, indeed, but the spectres were visible by their own light, like portraits painted on a dark ground, and I heard more frightfully the hollow moans and rattling chains of the prisoners, through the horrid stillness of the night.

Often did it seem to me as if I heard the dying groans of Hermogen and Euphemia. "Am I then guilty of your destruction? Was it not your own iniquity that brought you under the wrath of my avenging arm?" One night I had broken out furiously with these words, when, on the silence that for a moment succeeded, there distinctly and unequivocally arose a long deep-

drawn sigh or groan, differing from the noises which had disturbed me before. The latter might have been imaginary—this was assuredly real, and the sound was reverberated through the vault. Driven to distraction, I howled out—"It is thou, Hermogen!—the hour of thy vengeance is come—there is for me no hope of rescue!"

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It might be on the tenth night of my confinement, when, half-fainting with terror, I lay stretched out on the cold floor of my prison. I distinctly heard on the ground directly under me a light, but very audible knocking, which was repeated at measured intervals. I listened attentively. The noise was continued, as if with the determination to attract attention, and occasionally I could distinguish a strange sound of laughter, that also seemed to come out of the earth.

I started from the floor, and threw myself on the straw couch; but the beating continued, with the same detestable variety of laughter and groans. At last I heard a low, stammering, hoarse voice syllabically pronounce my name —"Me-dar-dus!—Me-dar-dus!"—My blood ran ice cold through every vein; but with a vehement effort I gained courage enough to call out, "Who's there?"—The laughter now became louder—the beating and groaning were renewed; again the stammering demon addressed me—"Me-dar-dus!—Me-dar-dus!"

I rose from bed, and stamped on the floor. "Whoever thou art," cried I; "man or devil, who art thus adding to the torments of an already miserable captive, step forth visibly before mine eyes, that I may look on thee, or desist from this unmeaning persecution!" The beating was now right under my feet. "He —he—he!—he—he—he!—Broth-er,—Broth-er! Open the door!—I am here —am here! Let us go hence to the wood—to the wood!"

Now, methought I recognised the voice as one that I had known before, but it was not then so broken and so stammering. Nay, with a chill shivering of horror, I almost began to think there was something in the accents that I now heard, resembling the tones of my own voice, and involuntarily, as if I wished to try whether this were really so, I stammered, in imitation, "Me-dar-dus!—Me-dar-dus!"

Hereupon the laughter was renewed, but it now sounded scornful and malicious.—"Broth-er,—Broth-er," said the voice, "do you know me again? —Open the door—the—the door!—We shall go hence, to the wood—to the wood!" "Poor insane wretch!" said I; "I cannot open the door for thee—I cannot enable thee to go forth into the pleasant woods, to hear the fresh rustling of the leaves, or breathe the fragrance of Heaven's pure atmosphere. I am, as thou art, shut up, hopeless and abandoned, within the gloomy walls of a prison."

To this address I was answered only by sobs and moans, as if from the bitterness of despairing grief; and the knocking became always more faint and indistinct, till at last it ceased altogether; and from exhaustion, I sunk into troubled slumber.

At length the morning light had broke in slanting gleams through the window; the locks and keys rattled, and the gaoler, whom I had not seen for many days, entered my room.

"Through the last night," said he, "we have heard all sorts of strange noises in your apartment, and loud speaking. What means this?"

"I am in the habit," answered I, "of talking loudly in my sleep, and even when awake I indulge in soliloquy. May not this much of liberty be granted me?"

"Probably," said the gaoler, "it is known to you, that every endeavour to escape, or to keep up conversation with any of your fellow-prisoners, will be interpreted to your disadvantage?" I declared that I had never formed any intentions of that kind; and after a few more surly remarks, he withdrew.

Some hours after this, I was again summoned, as before, to the hall of judgment. It was not, however, the judge by whom I had before been examined, but a very different personage, who now sat on the bench. He was a man apparently much younger in years, but far surpassing his predecessor in cleverness and versatility.

Laying aside all the formality of office, he left his place, came up to me in the friendliest manner, and invited me to take a chair.

Even at this moment his appearance is vividly present to my recollection. In constitution he seemed, for his time of life, to be much broken down; he was very bald, and wore spectacles. But in his whole demeanour there was so much of kindness and good-humour, that, on this account alone, I found it would be difficult for any one, but the most reckless and hardened of criminals, to resist his influence.

His questions were thrown out lightly, almost in the style of ordinary conversation, but they were well contrived, and so precisely couched, that it was impossible to avoid giving him decisive answers.

"In the first place, I must ask you," said he, "whether all that you have before deponed is perfectly consistent with truth; or, at least, whether many other circumstances may not have occurred to you as requisite to be told, in order to corroborate your former statement?"

"No," said I. "I have already freely communicated every circumstance which I could mention, or which it can be necessary to mention, as to the tenor of my simple and uniform life."

"Have you never associated much with clergymen, and with monks?"

"Yes—In Cracow, in Dantzig, Königsberg, Frauenberg. In the latter place especially, with two lay monks, who officiated there as priest and *capellan*."

"You did not state before that you were in Frauenberg?"

"Because I did not think it worth while to mention a short residence there of about eight days, on my way from Dantzig to Königsberg."

"So, you are a native of Kwicziczwo?"

This question the judge put in the Polish language, and in the most correct dialect, (all the while looking quite unconcerned, as if his use of that language had been on the present occasion a matter of course.)

For a moment this overthrew all my self-possession. I rallied, however; tried to recollect what little Polish I had learned from my friend Krczinski, and made shift to answer—

"On a small landed property of my father, near Kwicziczwo."

"What was the name of this estate?"

"Krczinzicswo—the family estate of my relations."

"For a native Pole, you do not pronounce your own language remarkably well. To say the truth, you speak it rather like a German—How is this?"

"For many years I have spoken nothing but German. Even while in Cracow, I had much intercourse with German students, who wished to learn from me our difficult language. Unawares, I may have accustomed myself to their accent, as one finds it very easy, when living in particular districts of the country, to adopt provincialisms."

The judge here looked significantly on me. A slight smile passed over his features; and, turning to the secretary, he dictated to him something in a whisper, of which I could distinctly make out the words "visibly embarrassed." Hereupon I wished to say something farther, in excuse for my bad Polish, but the judge gave me no opportunity.

"Have you never been in Königswald, where there is a large Capuchin Convent?"

"Never."

"The way hither from Königsberg should have led you to that town."

"I took another road."

"Have you never been acquainted with a monk from the convent there?"

"Never."

On receiving this answer, the judge rung the bell, and in a low voice gave an order to the attending officer.

Soon afterwards, an opposite door opened, and how was my whole frame shaken, and my very heart withered by terror, when I beheld the old Brother

Cyrillus! The judge asked,

"Do you know this man?"

"No. I have never seen him before."

It was now the monk's turn to speak. He came nearer; looked at me stedfastly —then clasping his hands, while tears involuntarily burst from his eyes —"Medardus!" cried he, "Brother Medardus! In God's name, how comes it that I find you thus horribly changed? How came you into this condition of abandoned and obdurate wickedness? Brother Medardus, return into thyself —Confess—Repent!—The patience and long-suffering of God are infinite."

"Can you then recognize this man," said the judge, "for the Monk Medardus from the Capuchin Convent in Königswald?"

"As I hope for Heaven's mercy," answered Cyrillus, "it is impossible for me to think otherwise. I believe that this man, although he now appears in a lay dress, is that very Medardus, who lived under my care as a novice at the Capuchin Convent, and whom I attended at the altar on the day of his consecration. Yet Medardus had on his neck a scar, in the shape of a cross, on the left side, and if this man—"

"You perceive," interposed the judge, turning to me, "that you are looked upon as a runaway monk from the town of Königswald, and you may rightly conjecture that the real monk alluded to has been guilty of serious crimes. But this man has a particular mark on his neck, which, according to your own account, you cannot have. This, therefore, at once gives you the best opportunity to prove your innocence. Untie your neckcloth."

"There is no need of this," answered I. "It is already certain, that an exact personal resemblance exists between myself and the fugitive criminal, who is to me wholly unknown; for I do bear a slight scar on my throat, such as has been described."—"Remove your neckcloth," repeated the judge. I did so; and the scar left by the wound from the Abbess's diamond cross, which had never been effaced, was immediately perceived. Hereupon Cyrillus uttered a loud exclamation.—"It is—it is the same impression of the cross," he added. —"Medardus! oh Medardus! hast thou then renounced thy eternal weal?"— Weeping and half fainting, he sunk into a chair.

"What answers do you now make to the assertion of this venerable man?" said the judge.

For a moment I felt as if lifted up and inspired by supernatural strength. It seemed as if the devil himself came and whispered to me.

"What power have these despicable weaklings over thee, who art yet strong and undaunted in spirit and in frame? Shall not Aurelia yet become thine?"

"This monk," said I, with great vehemence, "who sits there fainting in his chair, is a fantastic, feeble-minded, drivelling dotard. In his absurd visions, he takes me for a runaway capuchin from his own convent, to whom, as it

happens, I bear a personal resemblance."

The judge had till now remained perfectly tranquil, without changing his looks, gesture, or tone. Now, however, his visage, for the first time, assumed a dark and lowering earnestness of expression. He rose, as if the better to observe me, and even the glare of his spectacles was intolerable to my feelings, so that I could not utter a word more of my intended defence. For a moment I lost all self-possession. Abandoned to rage and despair, I struck my clenched knuckles to my forehead, and, in a tone which must have sounded unearthly, almost shrieked out the name "Aurelia!"

"What do you mean by that, sir?" said the judge, in a voice which, though calm, had yet the effect of thunder, and reverberated through the vaulted roof of the audience-chamber.

"A dark and implacable destiny," said I, "dooms me to an ignominious death. But I am innocent—I am wholly innocent of the crimes, whatever they may be, that are charged against me. Have compassion, therefore; and for the present, at least, let me go. I feel that madness begins to rage through my brain, and agitate every nerve: therefore, in mercy, let me go!"

The judge, who had resumed his seat, and become perfectly calm, dictated much to the secretary, of which I did not know the import. At last he read over to me a record, in which all his questions and my answers, with the evidence of Cyrillus, were faithfully set down. This record I was obliged to ratify by my own signature.

The judge then requested me, in a careless tone, to write for him, on separate slips of paper, something in Polish and in German. I did so, without being aware what object he had in view. He then immediately gave the German leaf to Cyrillus, with the question, "Have these characters any resemblance to the hand-writing of your brother, Monk Medardus?"

"It is precisely his hand even to the most minute peculiarities," said Cyrillus; and turning to me, was about to speak; but a look of the judge admonished him to silence. The latter examined carefully the leaf which I had written in Polish. He then rose, quitted the bench, and came down to me.

"You are no Pole," said he, in a serious and decisive manner. "This writing is altogether incorrect, full of errors, both in grammar and spelling. No native Pole would write in that style, even if he were destitute of that education which you have enjoyed."

"I was born," said I, "in Kwicziczwo, and therefore am most certainly a Pole; but even were this not really the case, and if circumstances compelled me to conceal my true rank and name, yet it would by no means follow, in consequence of this, that I must turn out to be the Monk Medardus, who, as I understand, came from the Capuchin Convent in Königswald."

"Alas! Brother," interposed Cyrillus, "did not our excellent Prior send you to Rome, placing the fullest confidence in your fidelity, prudence, and pious conduct; and is it thus that you requite him? Brother Medardus, for God's

sake, do not any longer, in this blasphemous manner, deny the holy profession to which you belong."

"I beg of you not to interrupt us," said the judge, and, turning again to me, proceeded—

"It is my duty to observe to you, that the disinterested evidence of this reverend clergyman affords the strongest presumptions, that you are actually that runaway monk, for whom you have been arrested. At the same time, I ought not to conceal, that various other persons will be brought forward, who also insist that they have unequivocally recognised you for that individual. Among them is one, to whom your escape from the due punishment or coercion of the law would be attended by no little danger, at all events, by no little fear and apprehension. Besides, many things have been discovered in your own travelling equipage, which support the allegations against you.

"Finally, sir, you may rely, that inquiries will be set on foot as to your pretended family, on which account application is already made to the court at Posen. All these things I explain to you the more openly, because it belongs to my office to convince you how little I wish, by artifice, or any undue method, to extort from you the truth, which you wish to conceal, but which, at all events, will soon be brought to light. Prepare yourself, therefore, beforehand, as you best can. If you are really that criminal named Medardus the Capuchin, you may be assured that justice will soon penetrate through your deepest disguise; and you will learn, in due time, the precise crimes of which you are accused. If, on the other hand, you are Mr Leonard of Kwicziczwo, and only, by some extraordinary *lusus naturæ*, forced to resemble Medardus, you will be furnished, even by us, with clear and decisive proofs to support this identity.

"You appeared at your first trial, in a very disordered state of mind; therefore I wished that you should be allowed sufficient time for mature reflection. After what has taken place to-day, you will again have ample store for meditation."

"Then," said I, "you look upon all that I have said to-day as utter falsehood? You behold in me only the runaway monk Medardus?"

To this I received merely a slight parting bow, with the words, "Adieu, Herr von Krczinski;" and I was forthwith led back to my prison.

Chapter IV

*

Every word uttered by this judge had penetrated to my very heart, and I was unable to subdue my vehement agitation. All the fictions that I had invented seemed to me utterly absurd and insipid. That the chief person who was to appear as my accuser, (and who was said to entertain such fears of me if left at liberty,) was Aurelia, I could have no doubt. How could I bear this, and how counteract her influence?

I considered afterwards what might have been suspicious among my travelling effects, and was much vexed by the recollection, that since my residence at the castle of the Baron von F—, I had retained in my *portefeuille*, a hair ring, on which Euphemia's name was enwoven, and which, perhaps, might be recognized by Aurelia. Besides, it had unfortunately occurred, that in the forest I had bound up Victorin's portmanteau with the knotted cord, which is part of the dress of our order; and this had still remained in my possession.

Tormented by these thoughts, I gave myself up for lost; and unconscious what I did, paced backwards and forwards in despair, through my narrow chamber. Then it seemed as if there was a rushing and whispering in mine ears, —"Thou fool," said a voice, "why should'st thou despair? Canst thou not think on Victorin?" Hereupon, in a loud voice, I called out—"Ha! the game is not lost!—Nay, it may yet be won!"

My heart beat, and my bosom heaved with new impulses. I had already thought, that among Euphemia's papers there must, of necessity, be found something which would point to Victorin's appearance at the castle as a monk. Resting on this assumption, (or probability,) I would, at my next examination, amplify on my former deposition as to the meeting with Victorin; nay, why should I not also have met with the monk Medardus? I could plead knowledge, also, of those adventures at the castle which ended so frightfully, and repeat them as if they came to me by hearsay. With such stories I could interweave references to myself, and to my resemblance with both these people.

In order to attain my object, however, the most trifling circumstances must be maturely weighed. I resolved, therefore, that I would commit to writing the romance, by the incidents of which I was to be rescued. The gaoler supplied me with the requisite materials, and I laboured with great zeal till late in the night. In writing, my imagination was roused, until I almost actually believed whatever I had set down to be the truth; and I had in the closest manner spun together a web of falsehood, wherewith I expected completely to blind the eyes of the judge.

The prison-clock had struck twelve, when I again heard softly, and as if from a distance, the knocking which, on the preceding day, so much disturbed me. I had resolved that I would pay no attention to this noise; but it approached nearer, and became louder. There were again, at measured intervals, the same divertisements of knocking, laughing, and groaning. I struck my hand with great vehemence on the table—"Be quiet!" cried I—"Silence below there!" Thus I thought that I should banish my persecutor, and recover my composure, but in vain! On the contrary, there arose instantly a sound of shrill discordant laughter, and once more the same detestable voice—"*Brüd-er-lein! —Brüd-er-lein![8]* Up to thee! Open the door! Open the door!"

Then right under me commenced a vehement rasping and scratching in the floor, accompanied by continuous groans and cachinnation. In vain did I try to write, and persuading myself that these were but illusions of the arch enemy, determined to hold them in contempt. The noise always became more intolerable, and was diversified occasionally by ponderous blows, so that I momentarily expected the gaolers to enter in alarm.

I had risen up, and was walking with the lamp in my hand, when suddenly I felt the floor shake beneath my tread. I stepped aside, and then saw, on the spot whereon I had stood, a stone lift itself out of the pavement, and sink again. The phenomenon was repeated, but at the second time I seized hold of the stone, and easily removed it from the flooring.

The aperture beneath was but narrow, and little or no light rose from the gulf. Suddenly, however, as I was gazing on it, a naked arm, emaciated, but muscular, with a knife, or dagger, in the hand, was stretched up towards me. Struck with the utmost horror, I recoiled from the sight. Then the stammering voice spoke from below—"Brother—brother Me-dar-dus is there—is there! —Take—take!—Break—break!—To the wood!—To the wood!"

Instantly all fear and apprehension were lost. I repeated to myself, "Take—take!—Break—break!" for I thought only of the assistance thus offered me, and of flight! Accordingly I seized the weapon, which the hand willingly resigned to me, and began zealously to clear away the mortar and rubbish from the opening that had been made.

The spectral prisoner below laboured also with might and main, till we had dislodged four or five large stones from the vault, and laid them aside. I had been occupied in this latter purpose, that is, in placing the large stones in a corner of my room, that they might not interrupt my work; when, on turning round, I perceived that my horrible assistant had raised his naked body as far as the middle, through the aperture that we had made. The full glare of the lamp fell on his pale features, which were no longer obscured as formerly, by long matted locks, or the overgrown grizzly beard, for these had been closely shaven. It could no longer be said that I was in vigorous health, while he was emaciated, for in that respect we were now alike. He glared on me with the grin, the ghastly laughter, of madness on his visage. At the first glance I RECOGNIZED MYSELF, and losing all consciousness and self-possession, fell in a deadly swoon on the pavement.

From this state of insensibility I was awoke by a violent pain in the arm. There was a clear light around me; the rattling of chains, and knocking of hammers, sounded through the vault. The gaoler and his assistants were occupied in loading me with irons. Besides handcuffs and ankle-fetters, I was, by means of a chain and an iron hoop, to be fastened to the wall.

"Now," said the gaoler, in a satisfied tone, when the workmen had finished, "the gentleman will probably find it advisable to give over troubling us with his attempts to escape for the future!"

"But what crimes, then," said the blacksmith, in an under tone, "has this obstreperous fellow committed?"

"How?" said the gaoler, "dost thou not know that much, Jonathan? The whole town talks of nothing else. He is a cursed Capuchin monk, who has murdered three men. All has been fully proved. In a few days there is to be a grand gala; and among other diversions, the scaffold and the wheel will not fail to play their part!"

I heard no more, and my senses were again lost. I know not how long I remained in that state, from which I only painfully and with difficulty awoke. I was alone, and all was utter darkness; but, after some interval, faint gleams of daylight broke into the low deep vault, scarcely six feet square, into which I now, with the utmost horror, perceived that I had been removed from my former prison. I was tormented with extreme thirst, and grappled at the water-jug which stood near me. Cold and moist, it slipped out of my numbed hands before I had gained from it even one imperfect draught, and, with abhorrence, I saw a large overgrown toad crawl out of it as it lay on the floor. "Aurelia!" I groaned, in that feeling of nameless misery into which I was now sunk —"Aurelia!—and was it for this that I have been guilty of hypocrisy and abominable falsehood in the court of justice—for this only, that I might protract, by a few hours, a life of torment and misery? What would'st thou," said I to myself, "delirious wretch, as thou art? Thou strivest after the possession of Aurelia, who could be thine only through an abominable and blasphemous crime; and however thou might'st disguise thyself from the world, she would infallibly recognize in thee the accursed murderer of Hermogen, and look on thee with detestation. Miserable deluded fool, where are now all thy high-flown projects, thy belief and confidence in thine own supernatural power, by which thou could'st guide thy destiny even as thou wilt? Thou art wholly unable and powerless to kill the worm of conscience, which gnaws on the heart's marrow, and thou wilt shamefully perish in hopeless grief, even if the arm of temporal justice should spare thee!"

Thus I complained aloud, but at the moment when I uttered these words, I felt a painful pressure on my breast, which seemed to proceed from some hard substance in my waistcoat pocket. I grappled with it accordingly, and drew out, to my surprise, a small stiletto. Never had I worn any such implement since I had been in the prison. It must, of necessity, be the same which had been held up to me by my mysterious *double*. I recognized the glittering heft. It was the identical stiletto with which I had killed Hermogen, and which, for many weeks, I had been without!

Hereupon there arose in my mind an entire revolution. The inexplicable manner in which this weapon had been returned to me, seemed like a warning from supernatural agents. I had it in my power to escape at will from the ignominious death that awaited me. I had it in my power to die voluntarily for the sake of Aurelia. It seemed again as if there was a rushing and whispering of voices around me; and among them Aurelia's accents were clearly audible. I beheld her as when formerly she appeared to me in the church of the Capuchin Convent. "I love thee, indeed, Medardus," said she; "but hitherto thou understandest me not. In this world there is for us no hope of enjoyment; the true festival and solemnization of our love is—death." I now firmly resolved that I would demand a new audience—that I would confess to the judge, without the least reserve, the whole history of my wanderings, after which I would, in obedience to the supposed warning, have recourse to suicide.

The gaoler now made his appearance, bringing me better food than usual, with the addition of a bottle of wine. "It is by the command of the Prince," said he, covering a table which his servant brought in after him. He then proceeded to unlock the chain by which I was bound to the wall.

Remaining firm in my determination, I took but little notice of this, and earnestly requested that he would communicate to the judge my wish for an audience that very afternoon, as I had much to disclose that lay heavy on my conscience. He promised to fulfil my commission, and retired.

Meanwhile, I waited in vain to be summoned to my trial. No one appeared until such time as it was quite dark, when the gaoler's servant entered and lighted my lamp as usual. Owing to the fixed resolution which I had adopted, I felt much more tranquil than before; and, as the night wore on, being greatly exhausted, I fell into a deep sleep.

My slumber was haunted, however, by a strange and very vivid dream. Methought I was led into a high, gloomy, and vaulted hall, wherein I saw, ranged along the walls, on high-backed chairs, a double row of spectral figures, like clergymen, all habited in the black *talar*,[9] and before them was a table covered with red cloth. At their head sat a judge, and near him was a Dominican friar, in the full habit of his order.

"Thou art now," said the judge, in a deep solemn voice, "given over to the spiritual court; forasmuch as thou, obstinate and criminal as thou art, hast attempted to deny thy real name, and the sacred profession to which thou belongest. Franciscus, or, according to thy conventual name, Medardus, answer, Dost thou plead guilty, or not guilty, to the crimes of which thou hast been accused?"

Hereupon I wished to confess all that I had done, which, in my own estimation, was sinful or blame-worthy. But, to my great horror, that which I uttered was not the thoughts that existed in my mind, and which I intended to deliver. On the contrary, instead of a sincere and repentant confession, I lost myself in wandering desultory gibberish, which sounded even in my own ears quite unpardonable.

Then the Dominican rose up, and, with a frightful menacing look—"Away—to the rack with him," cried he, "the stiff-necked obdurate sinner—to the rack with him—he deserves no mercy!" The strange figures that were ranged along the wall rose up, stretched out their long skeleton arms towards me, and repeated, in a hoarse horrible unison—"Ay, ay!—to the rack with him—to the rack—to the rack!"

Instantly I drew out my stiletto and aimed it violently towards my heart, but, involuntarily, it slid upwards to my throat, and striking on that part wherein the diamond necklace of the Abbess had left the sign of the cross, the blade broke in pieces as if it were made of glass, and left me unwounded! Then the executioner seized me, removed me from the audience-hall, and dragged me down into a deep subterranean vault.

There, however, my persecutions did not cease. The man once more demanded of me whether I would not make a true confession? Accordingly, I again made an attempt to do so, but my thoughts and words, as before, were at variance. Deeply repentant, torn equally by shame and remorse, I confessed all inwardly and in spirit; but whatever my lips brought forth audibly, was confused, senseless, unconnected, and foreign from the dictates of my heart. Hereafter, upon a sign received from the Dominican, the executioner stripped me naked, and tied my wrists together behind my back. How he placed me afterwards, I know not, but I heard the creaking of screws and pulleys, and felt how my stretched joints cracked, and were ready to break asunder. In the agony of superhuman torture, I screamed loudly and awoke.

The pain in my hands and feet continued as if I had been really on the rack, but this proceeded from the heavy chains which I still carried; yet, besides this, I found a strange pressure on my eye-lids, which, for some time, I was unable to lift up. At last, it seemed as if a weight were taken from my forehead, and I was able to raise myself on my couch.

Here my nightly visions once more stepped forth into reality, and I felt an ice-cold shivering through every vein. Motionless like a statue, with his arms folded, the monk—the Dominican whom I had seen in my dream—stood there, and glared on me with his hollow black eyes. In that look, I at once recognized the expression of the horrible painter, and fell, half fainting, back upon my straw-bed.

Yet, perhaps, thought I to myself, all this was but a delusion of my senses, which had its origin from a dream. I mustered courage, therefore—but the monk was there! He stood, as the painter had ever done, calm and motionless, with his relentless dark eyes fixed upon me.

"Horrible man!" cried I, "Avaunt!—Away!—But no! Man thou art not. Thou art the devil himself, who labours to drag me into everlasting destruction!—Away!—I conjure thee, in the name of God, begone!"

"Poor, short-sighted fool!" answered the Dominican, "I am not the fiend who endeavours to bind thee with his iron fetters; who seeks to turn thy heart from

those sacred duties to which thou hast, by Divine Providence, been appointed!—Medardus, poor insane wanderer! I have indeed appeared frightful to thee, even at those moments when thou should'st have recognized in me thy best friend—when thou wert tottering within a hair's-breadth of being hurled into the eternal gulf of destruction, I have appeared and warned thee; but my designs have ever been perverted and misunderstood. Rise up, and listen to what I would now say!"

The Dominican uttered this in a tone of deep melancholy and complaint. His looks, which I had before contemplated with such affright, were become relaxed and mild. My heart was roused by new and indescribable emotions. This painter, who had haunted me like a demon, now appeared to me almost like a special messenger of Providence, sent to console me in my extreme misery and despair.

I rose from my bed, and stepped towards him. It was no phantom! I touched his garments. I kneeled down involuntarily, and he laid his hand on my head as if to bless me. Then, in the brightest colouring of imagination, a long train of beautiful and cherished images rose on my mind. I was once more within the consecrated woods of the Holy Lime-Tree. I stood on the self-same spot of that favourite grove, where the strangely-dressed pilgrim brought to me the miraculous boy. From hence I wished to move onwards to the church, which I saw also right before me. There only it appeared to me, that I might now, penitent and repentant, receive at last absolution of my heavy crimes. But I remained motionless; my limbs were powerless, and I could scarcely retain the feeling of self-identity.—Then a hollow voice pronounced the words, "The will suffices for the deed!"

The dream vanished. It was the painter who had spoken these words.

"Incomprehensible being!" said I, "was it then thou, who art here with me as a friend, who appeared leaning on the pillar on that unhappy morning in the Capuchin church at Königswald? At night, in the trading town of Frankenburg? And now—"

"Stop there," said the painter; "it was I indeed who have been at all times near to thee, in order, if possible, to rescue thee from destruction and disgrace; but thy heart was hardened; thy senses were perverted. The work to which thou wert chosen, must, for thine own weal and salvation, be fulfilled."

"Alas!" cried I, in a voice of despair, "why, then, didst thou not withhold mine arm from that accursed deed, when Hermogen—"

"That was not allowed me," said the painter. "Ask no farther. The attempt to resist the eternal decrees of Omnipotence is not only sinful, but hopeless presumption. Medardus, thou now drawest near to thy appointed goal—*To-morrow*!"

At these words I shuddered; for I thought that I completely understood the painter. I believed that he knew and approved my premeditated suicide. He now retreated towards the door of my prison.—"When," said I, with great earnestness, "when shall I see you again?"—"AT THE GOAL," said he, in a

deep, solemn tone, that reverberated through the vault.—"So then—*to-morrow*?" He would not answer. The door opened—turned silently on its hinges—and the painter had vanished.

Chapter V

*

The faint gleams of daylight had long since made their way through the gloom of my wretched prison, when at last the gaoler made his appearance with a train of attendants, who carefully and obsequiously took off the fetters from my wounded arms and ankles. They announced also that I should be very soon led up for a final audience in the judgment-hall.

The summons came accordingly. Deeply reserved, and wrapt up in my own thoughts, becoming always more and more accustomed to the idea of immediate death, I stepped into the audience-chamber. I had inwardly arranged my confession in such manner, that I had only a short story to tell, which would yet embrace every circumstance that was of importance.

To my astonishment, the judge, directly on my entrance, left the bench, and came to meet me. I must have looked greatly emaciated and disfigured; for a cheerful smile, that had been at first on his countenance, changed itself obviously into an expression of the most painful sympathy and compassion. He shook hands, and made me take possession of a large arm-chair.

"Herr von Krczinski," said he, in a solemn diplomatic tone, "I am happy in being able to announce to you some very agreeable intelligence. By the Prince's commands, all proceedings against you are this day brought to an end. It appears that people have hitherto confounded you with another person; and of their mistaken accusations, your exact personal likeness to that individual must bear the blame. Your innocence is now established beyond the possibility of doubt. Mr Krczinski, *you are free*!"

A frightful giddiness now attacked me. The room, with all its furniture, seemed turning round. The figure of the judge was multiplied a thousand fold before mine eyes, and I fell into a swoon. When I awoke, the servants were rubbing my temples with eau de cologne; and I recovered so far, as to hear the judge read over a short *Protokoll*, stating that he had duly informed me of the process being given up, and of my final release from prison. But some indescribable feelings arising from that last interview with the painter, repressed all joy in my bosom. It seemed to me as if now, when people believed me innocent, I should voluntarily make a full confession of my crimes, and then plunge the dagger into my heart.

I wished to speak; but the judge seemed to expect that I would retire, and I retreated towards the door. He came after me a few steps. "I have now," said he, in a low voice, "fulfilled my official duties, and may confess that, from the first time of our meeting, you interested me very much. Notwithstanding that appearances (as you must yourself allow) were so greatly against you, yet I sincerely wished that you might not turn out to be the horrible monster of

wickedness for whom you had been stigmatized. I may now repeat to you, in confidence, my conviction, that you are no Pole: you were not born in Kwicziczwo: your name is not Leonard von Krczinski."

With composure and firmness I answered, "No."—"Nor are you a monk," said the judge, casting his eyes on the ground, that he might not seem to play the part of an inquisitor; but by this question I was irresistibly agitated. —"Listen, then," said I, in a resolute tone, "and I shall explain *all*."—"Nay, nay, be silent," said the judge. "What I surmised at first is, according to my present belief, wholly confirmed. I see that there is here some dark and deep mystery; and that, by some inexplicable game of chances, your fate is involved with that of certain personages of our court. But it is no longer my vocation to make inquiries; and I should look upon myself as a presumptuous intermeddler, if I wished to extort from you any of the real adventures of your life, of which the tenure has probably been very peculiar.

"There is but one suggestion which I cannot help offering. Would it not be well if you were to tear yourself away from this *residenz*, where there is so much that is hostile to your mental repose? After what has happened, it is almost impossible that your abode here can be agreeable to you."

When the judge spoke in this manner, my mind again underwent an entire revolution. All the dark shadows that had gathered around me were suddenly dissolved. The spirit of life once more, with all its enjoyments, vibrated through every nerve.—"Aurelia! Aurelia!—Should I leave this place and forsake her for ever!"

The judge looked on me with an expression of the greatest astonishment. —"God forbid, Mr Leonard," said he, "that a very frightful apprehension, which has now risen up in my mind, should ever be fulfilled. But you know best the nature of your own plans. I shall say no more."

The hypocritical calmness with which I now answered him, was a proof that my short-lived repentance was over and gone.—"So then," said I, "you still look upon me as guilty?"—"Permit me, sir," said the judge, "to keep my present fears to myself. They are, I must confess, unsubstantiated by proof, and are perhaps the result of imaginary apprehensions. It has been in the most conclusive manner proved, that you are not the Monk Medardus; for that very man is in his own person here among us, and has been recognized by the old Father Cyrillus, though the latter had been deceived at the trial, by the exactitude of your resemblance. Nay, this man does not deny that he is the Capuchin Medardus, for whom you were arrested. Therefore everything has happened that could have been desired, in order to free you from that first imputation."

At that moment an attendant called the judge away, and thus the dialogue was interrupted at the very time when it began to be disagreeable to me. I betook myself forthwith to my old lodgings in the town, where I found my effects placed carefully in the same order in which I had left them. My papers had been put up in a sealed envelope. Only Victorin's *portefeuille* and the Capuchin's hair-rope were wanting. My suppositions as to the importance that would be attached to the latter article were therefore correct.

But a short time elapsed, when an equerry of the Prince made his appearance, with a card from the Sovereign, and the present of a very elegant box, set with diamonds. The card was in his usual familiar style. "There have been very severe measures taken against you, Mr Krczinski, but neither we ourselves, nor our court of justice, can rightly be blamed. You are inconceivably like in person to a very wicked and dangerous man. All now, however, has been cleared up to your advantage. I send you a small token of my good will, and hope that we shall see you soon."

The good will of the Prince and his present were at this moment both indifferent to me. My long imprisonment had greatly enfeebled my bodily strength, and the extreme excitement which I had undergone, was followed by lassitude and relaxation. Thus I had sunk into a deep and dark melancholy, and looked on it as very fortunate when the physician came to visit me, and prescribed some remedies, which he judged absolutely requisite for the restoration of my health. He then, as usual, entered into conversation.

"Is it not," said he, "a most extraordinary chance, and concatenation of circumstances, that, at the very moment when every one felt himself convinced that you were that horrible monk, who had caused such misfortunes in the family of the Baron von F—, this monk should *himself* actually appear, and rescue you at once from the impending danger?"

"It would oblige me," said I, "if you would inform me of the minuter circumstances which led to my liberation; for as yet I have only heard generally that the Capuchin Medardus, for whom I had been taken, had been found here and arrested."

"Nay, it is to be observed," answered the physician, "that he did not come hither of his own accord, but was brought in, bound with ropes, as a maniac, and delivered over to the police at the very time when you first came to the *residenz*. By the way, it just now occurs to me that, on a former occasion, when I was occupied in relating to you the wonderful events which had happened at our court, I was interrupted, just as I had got to the story of this abominable Medardus, the acknowledged son of Francesco, and his enormous crimes at the castle of the Baron von F—. I shall now take up the thread of my discourse exactly where it was then broken off.

"The sister of our reigning Princess, who, as you well know, is Abbess of a Cistertian monastery at Kreuzberg, once received very kindly, and took charge of a poor deserted woman, who, with her infant son, was travelling homeward, towards the south, from a pilgrimage to the Convent of the Holy Lime-Tree."

"The woman," said I, "was Francesco's widow, and the boy was Medardus."

"Quite right," answered the physician; "but how do you come to know this?"

"The events of this Medardus's life," said I, "have indeed become known to me in a manner the strangest and most incredible. I am aware of them even up to the period when he fled from the castle of the Baron von F—; and of

every circumstance that happened there I have received minute information."

"But how?" said the physician; "and from whom?"

"In a dream," answered I; "in a dream I have had the liveliest perception of all his sufferings and adventures."

"You are in jest," said the physician.

"By no means," replied I. "It actually seems to me, as if I had in a vision become acquainted with the history of an unhappy man, who, like a mere plaything in the hands of dark powers,—a weed cast on the waves of a stormy sea, had been hurled hither and thither, and driven onward from crime to crime. In the Holzheimer forest, which is not far from hence, on my way hither, the postilion, one stormy night, drove out of the right track, and there, in the *forst-haus*—"

"Ha! now I understand you," said the physician, "there you met with the monk."

"So it is," answered I; "but he was mad."

"He does not seem to be so now," observed the physician. "Even at that time, no doubt, he had lucid intervals, and told you his history."

"Not exactly," said I. "In the night, being unapprized of my arrival at the *forst-haus*, he came into my room. Perhaps it was on account of the extraordinary likeness existing betwixt us, that my appearance frightened him extremely. He probably looked upon me as his *double*, and believed that such an apparition of necessity announced his own death. Accordingly, he began to stammer out strange confessions, to which I listened for some time, till at last, being tired by a long journey, I fell asleep; but the monk, not aware of this, continued to speak on. I dreamed, but know not where the reality ended and the dream began. So far as I can recollect, it appears to me that the monk maintained that it could not be he who had caused the death of the Baroness von F— and Hermogen, but that they had both been murdered by the Count Victorin."

"Strange, very strange!" said the physician. "But wherefore did you conceal this mysterious adventure at your trial?"

"How could I imagine," answered I, "that the judge would attach any importance to such a story? At best, it must have appeared to him a mere romance; and will any enlightened court of justice receive evidence which even borders on the visionary and supernatural?"

"At least," replied the physician, "you might have at once supposed that people were confounding you with this insane monk, and should have pointed out him as the real Capuchin Medardus?"

"Ay, forsooth," answered I; "and in the face of the venerable Father Cyrillus, (such, I believe, was his name,) an old dotard, who would absolutely have me, right or wrong, to be his Capuchin brother? Besides, it did not occur to

me either that the insane monk was Medardus, or that the crime which he had confessed to me was the object of the present process. But the keeper of the *forst-haus* told me the monk had never given up his name. How, then, did people here make the discovery?"

"In the simplest manner," said the physician. "The monk, as you know, had been a considerable time with the forester. Now and then, it seemed as if he were completely cured; but at last he broke out again into insanity so frightful, that the forester was obliged to send him hither, where he was shut up in the mad-house. There he sat night and day, with staring eyes, and motionless as a statue. He never uttered a word, and must be fed, as he never moved a hand. Various methods were tried to rouse him from this lethargy, but in vain; and his attendants were afraid to try severe measures, for fear of bringing back his outrageous madness.

"A few days ago, the forester's eldest son came to the *residenz*, and desired admittance into the mad-house, to see the monk, which, accordingly, was granted him. Quite shocked at the hopeless state in which he found the unhappy man, he was leaving the prison, just as Father Cyrillus, from the Capuchin Convent in Königswald, happened to be going past. He spoke to the latter, and begged of him to visit a poor unhappy brother, who was shut up here, as, perhaps, the conversation of one of his own order might be beneficial to the maniac.

"To this Cyrillus agreed; but as soon as he saw the monk, he started back, with a loud exclamation—'Medardus!' cried he; 'unhappy Medardus!' And at that name the monk, who before scarcely shewed signs of life, began to open his eyes, and attend to what went forward. He even rose from his seat; but had scarcely done so, when, seemingly overpowered by his cruel malady, (of which he was himself not unconscious,) he uttered a strange hollow cry, and fell prostrate on the ground.

"Cyrillus, accompanied by the forester's son and others, went directly to the judge by whom you had been tried, and announced this new discovery. The judge went back with them to the prison, where they found the monk in a state of great weakness; but (judging by his conversation) not at all under the influence of delirium. He confessed that he was Medardus, from the Capuchin Convent in Königswald; and Cyrillus agreed on his side, that your inconceivable resemblance to this Medardus had completely deceived him.

"Now, however, he remarked many circumstances of language, tone, and gesture, in which Mr Leonard differed from the real Capuchin. What is most of all remarkable is, that they discovered on the neck of the madman the same mark, in the form of a cross, to which so much importance was attached at your trial. Several questions also were now put to the monk, as to the horrid incidents at the castle of the Baron von F—, to which the only answers they could then obtain were in broken exclamations. 'I am, indeed,' said he, 'an accursed and abandoned criminal; but I repent deeply of all that I have done. Alas! I allowed myself to be cheated, by temptations of the devil, out of my own reason, and out of my immortal soul. Let my accusers but have some compassion on me, and allow me time—I shall confess all.'

"The Prince being duly advised of what had happened, commanded that the proceedings against you should be brought to an end, and that you should be immediately released from prison. This is the history of your liberation. The monk has been brought from the mad-house into one of the dungeons for criminals."

"And has he yet confessed all? Is he the murderer of Euphemia, Baroness von F—, and of Hermogen? How stands public belief with regard to the Count Victorin?"

"So far as I know," said the physician, "the trial of the monk was only to begin this day. As to Count Victorin, it appears that nothing farther must be said of him. Whatever connection those former events at our court may seem to have with the present, all is to remain in mystery and oblivion."

"But," said I, "how the catastrophe at the Baron's castle can be connected with these events at your Prince's court, I am unable to perceive."

"Properly," answered the physician, "I allude more to the dramatis personæ than to the incidents."

"I do not understand you," said I.

"Do you not remember," said the physician, "my relation of the circumstances attending the Duke's death?"

"Certainly," answered I.

"Has it not then become clear to you," resumed the doctor, "that Francesco entertained a criminal attachment towards the Italian Countess? That it was he who made his entrance secretly into the bridal chamber, and who poniarded the Duke? Victorin, as you know, was the off-spring of that crime. He and Medardus, therefore, are sons of one father. Victorin has vanished from the world, without leaving a trace of his fate. All inquiries after him have been in vain."

"The monk," said I, "hurled him down into the Devil's Abyss, amid the Thuringian mountains. Curses on the delirious fratricide!"

Softly, at the moment after I had pronounced these words, there came on my ears, from underneath the floor whereon we stood, the same measured knocking which I had heard in my dungeon. Whether this were imagination or reality, the effect on my feelings was the same. I could not contend against the horror which now seized me. The physician seemed neither to remark my agitation, nor the mysterious noise.

"What!" said he, "did the monk then confess to you that Victorin also fell by his hand?"

"Yes," answered I. "At least I drew this conclusion from various passages in his confused and broken confessions—connecting them also in my own mind with the sudden disappearance of Victorin. Woe—woe to the relentless

fratricide!"

The knocking was now more powerful. There was again a moaning and sobbing. Methought a shrill laughter sounded through the air, and I heard the same stammering voice—"Me-dar-dus—Me-dar-dus!—He—he—he—Help, help!—He—he—he—Help, help!"—I was amazed that the physician took no notice of this, but he quietly resumed.

"An extraordinary degree of mystery seems to rest upon Francesco's appearance at our court. It is highly probable that he also was related to our Prince's house. This much; at least, is certain, that Euphemia, Baroness von F—, was the daughter—"

With a tremendous stroke, so that the bolts and hinges seemed broken into splinters, methought the door flew open, and I heard the voice of the spectre absolutely scream with laughter. I could not bear this any longer. "Ho—ho—ho! *Brüd-er-lein!*" cried I. "Here am I—Here am I!—Come on—come on quickly, if thou would'st fight with me—Now the owl holds his wedding-feast, and we shall mount to the roof, and contend with each other. There the weather-cock sings aloud, and he who knocks the other down, is king, and may drink blood!"

"How now?" cried the physician, starting up, and seizing me by the arm. "What the devil is all that? You are ill, Mr Leonard, dangerously ill. Away—away with you to bed!"

I continued, however, staring at the open door, momentarily expecting that it would open, and that my horrible *double* would enter *in propria persona*. Nothing appeared, however, and I soon recovered from the delirium and horror which had seized upon me.

The physician insisted that I was much worse than I supposed myself to be, and attributed all the mental derangement and wildness that I had betrayed, to the effects of my long imprisonment, and the agitation which, on account of my trial, I must have undergone.

I submissively used whatever sedative remedies he prescribed; but what most of all contributed to my recovery was, that the horrible knocking was not heard any more, and that the intolerable *double* seemed to have forsaken me altogether.

Chapter VI

*

The delightful season of spring had now once more returned. Every morning the birds serenaded me at the window of my lodgings, which were in a garden-house, near a street called the Parterre, not far from the river. Doubtless, the year is never so delightful and interesting as when all things are yet undeveloped, and in their prime; when the gardener is yet going about, with his hatchet, and bill-hook, and large sheers, lopping the branches, though the flourishing boughs are already redolent of green buds, that give out their fresh odours in the warm sun. One says to himself—Let the gardener, or pruner, do his worst—let him remove every unprofitable branch, so that the daylight may fall into the most secret recesses, where the loves of a former year have been celebrated and are gone by, yet the trees will, ere long, be in their full luxuriance—all that he has lopped away will soon be more than amply replaced.

It is the season of hope and bright anticipations. Every new flower that rises from the teeming earth, and every bright green leaf that breaks forth along the southern slope of the forest, calls forth responsive feelings of buoyancy and delight in the soul.

Thus it happened, that one morning the vernal sun darted his unclouded golden gleams into my chamber. Sweet odours of flowers streamed through the open window, for the wind was in the south-west. The birds, as usual, cheered me with their songs.

An irresistible longing urged me to go forth, and wander at will through the open country. Despising, therefore, the directions of my physician, I dressed, went down stairs, and betook myself, in the first place, to the Prince's park. There the trees and shrubs, rustling with their new-born green leaves, greeted the weakly convalescent. It seemed as if I had just awoke from a long and heavy dream; and deep sighs were the inexpressive tokens of rapture which I breathed forth, amid the joyous carolling of birds, the humming of insects, and gladness of all nature.

Ay, life itself now appeared to me like a heavy and frightful dream, not only for the time lately passed, but through the whole interval since I had left the convent. I now found myself in a walk, shaded by dark platanus trees, which give out their green leaves very early in the year; and gradually I became lost in reverie. Methought I was once more in the garden of the Capuchin Convent at Königswald. Out of the distant thickets rose already the well-known lofty crucifix, at which I had so often prayed with fervent devotion for strength to resist all temptation.

The cross seemed to me to be now that only goal, after which I ought to strive; *there*, prostrate in the dust, to do penance for the sinful dreams in which I had indulged, for the guilty delusions into which I had been led by the Arch-fiend. I stepped forward, therefore, with my clasped hands lifted up, and with my eyes fixed upon the cross. Methought I heard the pious hymns of the monks borne upon the air; but it was only the mysterious voice of the woods, where the wind was up amid the yet dry branches and the verdant foliage.

Its influence was more than in my weakly condition I could yet bear. I was soon obliged to support myself against a tree, and even to lie down on the turf: yet I never lost sight of the cross, but collecting my whole strength, rose again, and tottered on. However, I could only reach a rustic moss-seat, in front of the consecrated thicket, where, like a weak old man, I sat languidly down, and in hollow groans tried to lighten the anguish of my oppressed heart.

How long I remained in this situation, I know not. But at last I heard a rustling, and the sounds of light steps on the walk. Instinctively, I knew whom I was to expect—AURELIA! Scarcely had I formed the thought, when, turning the corner of an opposite walk leading towards the seat, she stood visibly before me!

Description here fails me, nor indeed have I in this narrative often attempted to describe. Tears glistened in her heavenly blue eyes; but through those tears gleamed a kindling light of love, which was, perhaps, foreign to the saint-like character of Aurelia. This expression, however, reminded me at once of that mysterious visitant of the confessional, whom in my cherished dreams I had so often beheld. Aurelia advanced towards me. She accepted my proffered hand. "Can you," said she in a low voice—"Can you ever forgive me?"

Then losing all self-possession, I threw myself on the ground before her. I seized her hand, and bathed it with my tears.—"Aurelia, Aurelia!" cried I, "for thy sake, gladly would I endure martyrdom!—I would die a thousand deaths!" I felt myself gently lifted up. It was Aurelia who raised me, and who afterwards sunk into my arms. I scarcely know how these moments passed. Probably our interview was short, for I remember only these words—"All my best hopes are now fulfilled—all the mysterious fears that have haunted me are at an end!—But see! we are observed." She quickly disengaged herself from my embrace, and I saw the Princess coming up one of the walks. Not wishing at present to venture an interview with one whom I had never dared to look on as a friend, I retired into the thicket, where I discovered that the object which I had mistaken for a crucifix, was only the grey withered stem of an old pollard willow.

From that moment, I no longer felt any effects of my severe illness, far less any influence of melancholy. The kiss of reconciliation which I had thus received from Aurelia, inspired me with new life; and it seemed as if, for the first time, I enjoyed the mysterious raptures of which even this our terrestrial existence is susceptible. For the first time, I knew the happiness of mutual love! I stood upon the highest pinnacle of worldly fortune, and my path must,

from henceforth, lead downwards, in order to conduct me to that goal which the powers of darkness had seemed to mark out for my final destination.

It was a dream of happiness like this to which I alluded, when I before painted the delights of my first meeting again with Aurelia at the Prince's court. Then I addressed myself to thee, oh stranger! who may one day read these pages. I requested thee to recall the bright sunny days of thy first love, and to imagine that dark disappointment had annihilated every prospect painted for thee by the fairy hands of Hope—then would'st thou be able to sympathize with the unhappy monk, who, in his solitary prison, moaning over the remembrance of his early visions, lay the victim of despair. Yet once more I beg of you to recall that happy time—but now let there be no thought nor apprehension of disappointment—and I need not then attempt to describe to thee the supernatural light that was now shed on my path by my fortunate love. No gloomy thoughts had longer any influence over my mind; I began even to entertain a firm conviction that I was not the reckless criminal who, at the Baron's castle, had killed Hermogen and Euphemia, but that it was actually the delirious monk whom I had met at the *forst-haus*, that had been the culprit.

All, therefore, that I had said to the physician appeared to me no longer the fiction of my own brain, but the true narrative of events which to myself remained mysterious and inexplicable. The Prince had received me with the utmost kindness as a valued friend, whom he had believed lost, and by whose unexpected return he had been greatly rejoiced. This conduct of the Sovereign naturally gave the tone to that of all my former acquaintances at court; only the Princess seemed still to look upon me with coldness and reserve.

I had now the opportunity of daily meetings with Aurelia, nor did any one venture remarks on our attachment. Many times our interviews were without witnesses; but on these occasions her saint-like purity, mildness, and timidity of character, which I could not but observe, inspired me with an involuntary awe and reverence. I felt that she placed in me implicit confidence, and with no one, not even with the nearest relation, could such meetings have been more safe.

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For several days I had not seen Aurelia. She had gone with the Princess to a neighbouring summer-house in the forest. At last I could not bear her absence, but determined on a pedestrian excursion thither.

When I arrived, it was already late in the evening. The sun had declined in red effulgence in the west. The air was filled with the odoriferous breath of young leaves and flowers, and the woods resounded with the sweetest notes of unnumbered nightingales. The approach to the Princess's country-house was through a very long avenue of magnificent pine-trees, whose massy down-hanging branches swept the ground, waving in the balmy evening breeze with a mysterious murmur; and, notwithstanding all the enchantments of the hour and scene, methought I almost heard a warning voice pronounce the word, "Beware!" whereupon I only quickened my pace, and with a

beating heart arrived at the garden-gate of the summer-house.

In the garden I met with one of the maids of honour, who pointed out to me the wing of the chateau in which were Aurelia's apartments, for I by no means wished to encounter the Princess. Softly I opened the door of the anti-room, from which the warm breath of flowers and exotic plants greeted me with their almost too-powerful fragrance. Remembrance was busy with her dim illusions. "Is not this," said I, "the *identical* chamber of Aurelia at the Baron's castle, where, on that fatal night—" Scarcely had I formed this idea, when methought a dark form reared itself up in gigantic height behind me, and, with terror that shook my inmost heart, I heard a voice pronounce the name, "Hermogen!"

Losing all self-possession, I tottered onwards. I intended to knock, but the door of the cabinet was ajar, and I saw Aurelia kneeling at a *tabourett*, on which there was an open book, and above it a crucifix. I looked back trembling, to see if the spectre was yet there, but it was now vanished; then, in a tone of rapture, though not such as to alarm her, I called out, "Aurelia—Aurelia!" "Is it possible," said she, softly—"Leonard, my beloved, how came you hither?" She arose, and in the next moment was folded in my arms. Her luxuriant hair hung dishevelled over my head and shoulder. I felt her heart beat, and saw her eyes gleam with unwonted fire; but at that moment there was a noise behind us as if from the strong and powerful beating of wings. A moan like the death-cry of one mortally wounded, sounded through the chamber. "Hermogen!" cried Aurelia, and sunk fainting out of my arms. I placed her on the sofa, but, in a voice of horror, she cried to me, "Away—away! I command, I beseech you, begone!"

Scarcely knowing what I did, I left the room, and soon afterwards found myself, unawares, in the entrance-hall of the ground-floor, where I was met by the Princess. She looked at me gravely and haughtily. "Mr Leonard," said she, "I am indeed not a little surprised to find you here—What means this intrusion?" By a violent effort, combating my distraction, I stammered out some incoherent apologies, by which I perceived, from the looks of the Princess, that she was by no means satisfied. On the contrary, I durst not venture to remain longer in the house, but, after a hasty obeisance, betook myself to the front-gate, and departed.

As I passed once more through the darkness amid the waving pine-trees, methought I no longer walked alone! On the contrary, it seemed to me as if some person ran all the way very near me, keeping time with my steps, and as if I heard a stammering voice, which pronounced the words, "Ev-er—ev-er am I with thee! Broth-er—broth-er Me-dar-dus! Go whither thou wilt, east, north, or south, I am ever with thee!"

Hereupon I paused and looked round me; I became convinced that this horrible *double*, by whom I was haunted, had his existence only in my own disturbed imagination. However, I could by no means get rid of the frightful image; he continued to run along by my side, and to speak with me at intervals, till at last it seemed to me as if I must actually enter into conversation, and relate to him the recent adventures of my life. Accordingly, I confessed that I had just now been very foolish, and had allowed myself

once more to be terrified by the insane Hermogen; however, that St Rosalia should now very soon be irrevocably mine, and that, for her sake only, I had become a monk, and received the investiture and consecration.

Then my detestable *double* laughed and groaned as he had before done, and stuttered out—"But lose no time—lose no time—Quick-ly, quick-ly!"

"Nay, have a little patience," said I, "and all will go well. Only, the blow that I struck Hermogen has not been deep enough. He has got one of those damned protecting crosses in the throat, even as thou hast, and I have! But my stiletto, which thou hast preserved for me, is still sharp and bright!"—"He—he—he!—He—he—he!—Strike him well, then—strike him well!" Such were the accents of my infernal companion, amid the dark rushing of the pine-tree woods; nor did they end there. The same persecution accompanied me almost the whole way homeward into town, until at last, the fresh morning wind cooled the burning fever of my brow, and a roseate splendour advancing in the east, announced the dawn of a new vernal day.

I had enjoyed only about two hours' broken rest at my lodgings, when I received a summons to attend the Prince. I betook myself immediately to the palace, where he received me very cordially.

"In truth, Mr Leonard," he began, "you have won my good opinion in the highest degree. I cannot conceal from you that my prepossessions in your favour have ripened into real friendship. I should be sorry to lose you, and would rejoice in contributing to your happiness. Besides, it is our duty to atone to you as much as possible, for all that you have been made to suffer among us. By the way, Mr Leonard, do you know what was the direct cause of the process against you—that is, who first accused you?"

"No, sire," answered I.

"Baroness Aurelia," said the Prince,—"you are astonished. Nay, it is very true, Baroness Aurelia, Mr Leonard, mistook you for a Capuchin."—(He laughed heartily.)—"Now, if you are a Capuchin, you are certainly the politest and best-favoured of that order that has ever fallen under my notice. Say, in truth, Mr Leonard, have you ever been a monk?"

"Sire," answered I, "I know not by what wicked fatality I am always to be transformed into a monk; but—"

"Well, well!" interrupted the Prince, "I am no inquisitor. It would be a serious disaster, however, if you were bound by any clerical vows. But to the point—Would you not like to have your revenge on Aurelia for the mischief that she has brought on you?"

"In what mortal's breast," said I, "would such a thought as that of revenge arise against the amiable Baroness?"

"Do you not love Aurelia?" said the Prince.

I was silent, but replied by an expressive gesture, laying my hand on my heart.

"I know it," resumed his highness. "You have loved this young lady since that moment when she, for the first time, made her appearance here with the Princess. Your affection is returned, and indeed with a fervour of which I scarcely believed the mild Aurelia to be capable. The Princess has told me all, and I know that she lives only for you. Would you believe, that after your imprisonment, Aurelia gave herself up to a mood of utter despondency, and became at last so ill, that we entertained serious apprehensions for her life? She at that time looked upon you as the murderer of her brother, and her grief, therefore, appeared to us unaccountable; but the truth was, that even then she loved you.

"Now, Mr Leonard, or Mr von Krczinski, (for you are by birth noble,) I shall fix you at the court in a manner that will be agreeable to you. You shall marry Aurelia, and in a few days we shall solemnize the betrothment. I myself will act in place of the bride's father. Meanwhile, adieu!" The Prince, in his usual abrupt manner, then left the audience-chamber.

Chapter VII

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Aurelia my wife!—the wife of a perjured and apostate monk! It may seem incredible that my mind could undergo so many changes; but it is nevertheless true, that though this idea had so long been cherished, and had been familiar to myself, yet now, when I for the first time heard it announced by another, it was attended by a clear perception of its unfitness, and the almost utter unfeasibility of its realization. No! said I to myself, the dark powers by whom my actions have been instigated, whatever else of evil they may have in store, cannot have resolved on this! I endeavoured to combat these fears, but in vain; and yet to determine on voluntary separation from Aurelia was impossible.

It was the idea of the marriage ceremony, which filled me with a degree of terror to myself inexplicable. I believed, indeed, that if the perjured monk dared to kneel before the altar, making a mockery of sacred vows, then, of necessity, the figure of that spectral omnipresent painter, not with a demeanour mild and friendly as in the prison, but announcing vengeance and destruction, would appear—as at Francesco's marriage—to overwhelm me with disgrace and misery.

But then methought I heard, in a deep solemn tone, the words, "And yet must Aurelia be thine! Weak-minded fool! How durst thou think of changing that destiny which hangs over her and thee?" Scarcely were these words uttered, when another voice rose within me—"Down—down! throw thyself into the dust, thou blind wicked mortal! Never can she be thine!—It is the blessed St Rosalia herself, whom thou madly think'st to clasp in the embraces of terrestrial passion!"

Thus utterly at variance with myself, tost hither and thither by contending impulses, I had left the palace, and wandered through the park, in a state of such distraction, that, to arrive at any rational plan for my future conduct, was wholly impossible. Past and gone was now that happier mood, in which I had looked upon my whole former life, and especially on my adventures at the Baron's castle, as a frightful dream! On the contrary, I saw in myself only a base criminal, and hypocritical deceiver. All that I had said to the physician and the judge was only a collection of foolish and badly invented falsehoods, by no means inspired, as I had before persuaded myself, by any supernatural voice, but the off-spring of my own feeble ingenuity.

Lost and wrapt up in these bitter reflections, I was hurrying through the streets towards my lodgings, when I was overtaken by one of the Prince's carriages, which immediately stopped. I heard my own name pronounced aloud, and saw that I was beckoned to by the physician, who alighted, and immediately took me with him to his apartments.

"What means all this?" said he, "you violent unreasonable man! You have thought proper, it seems, to make your appearance like a ghost to the Baroness Aurelia, in the gloom of night too, so suddenly, that the poor nervous young lady has been almost frightened out of her senses, and has been attacked by serious indisposition—Well, well," (continued he, perceiving a change in my countenance,) "I must not frighten you. Her illness has not lasted long. She has again been out walking, and will return to-morrow with the Princess into town. Of you, Mr Leonard, the Baroness has in confidence said much to me. She longs greatly to see you again, and to excuse herself; for she allows, that her conduct at your last visit, must have appeared to you both childish and silly."

When I reflected on what had really passed at the summer-house, I was at a loss how to interpret these expressions of Aurelia. The physician, however, gave me no time to brood over this, but indulged in his usual vein of loquacity. He gave me to understand, that he was perfectly aware of the Prince's views for my advancement in rank, and marriage with Aurelia. Hereupon reverting to her late fit of nervous irritability, he gave, wickedly enough, such a caricature (for he was an excellent mimic) of her conduct and expressions, when he had arrived express at the summer-house, contrasting these also, with the grave ceremonious *hauteur* of the Princess, that I was forced, even against my will, to laugh, (for the good humour of the physician was infectious,) and gradually recovered a degree of cheerfulness, which, but a few minutes before, I had supposed lost for ever.

"Could the imagination of any man," said the physician, "have anticipated, when you came to our *residenz*, that so many wonderful events would, in so short a time, have taken place: First, the absurd misunderstanding which brought you as a criminal before the Justiciary Court—Then the truly enviable fortune which has acquired for you the special friendship and patronage of the Prince!"

"His highness," said I, "no doubt treated me from the first with marked condescension and politeness. As to the advances that I have lately made in his good graces, I ascribe this to his recollection of the unjust prosecution by which I suffered, and which he is now desirous to atone for."

"The Prince's favour," said the physician, "perhaps is not owing so much to this, as to another circumstance, which you, no doubt, can guess."

"I cannot," answered I.

"The people, it is true," resumed the physician, "continue to give you the same name which you assumed on your first arrival. Every one knows, however, that you are by birth noble, as the intelligence which has been received from Poland confirms all that you had asserted!"

"Admitting this intelligence to have been received," said I, "I know not why it should have any influence on my reception at court, since, at my first introduction there, I declared that I had no pretensions to any rank beyond that of a citizen *particulier*, and yet was treated by all with kindness, and

even respect."

To this the physician replied, by a harangue, which lasted nearly an hour, on the true principles which regulate the distinction of ranks; and the lecture being delivered with his usual vivacity, had at least the beneficial effect of engaging my attention, and putting to flight the gloomy thoughts by which I had been overwhelmed. I could not but feel also a kind of triumph at the manner in which I had again seemed to rule over my own destiny, as by accidentally choosing the Polish name of Kwicziczwo in conversation with the old lady, on the evening of my first presentation at court, I had created for myself that patent of nobility which induced the Prince to bestow on me the Baroness in marriage.

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As soon as I ascertained that the Princess was returned to the palace, I hastened to Aurelia, and immediately obtained an interview. The desire to excuse herself for the needless and capricious agitation, to which she had given way on my last visit, gave a new tone to her voice and manner, and new expression to her eyes, so that her timidity being less, I could once more say to myself, "The prize will yet be thine!" Tears glistened in her beautiful eyes, and her tone was that of earnest and plaintive supplication.

Still haunted by the idea of my spectral *double*, I wished to learn from her explicitly what had been the real cause of her terror. "Aurelia," said I, "I conjure you by all the saints, tell me what horrible phantom was it that then appeared to you?" At this question she gazed at me with obvious astonishment—her looks became always more and more fixed, as if in deep thought—then suddenly started up as if to go, but stood irresolute. At last, with both hands pressed on her eyes, she sobbed out—"No—no—no;—It is not—it cannot be he!"—

Unconsciously she allowed me to support her to a chair, into which she sank down exhausted. "For God's sake, Aurelia, who is it that you mean?" cried I, though I had already dark anticipations of what was passing through her mind. "Alas!" said she, "my beloved friend, were I to confess to you the whole truth, would you not look on me as an insane visionary? A horrible phantom accompanies me through life, and mars, by its irresistible influence, every enjoyment, even at the times when I should otherwise be most happy. At our very first meeting, this frightful dream hovered, as if on dark wings, over me, spreading an ice-cold atmosphere of death around us, where there should have prevailed only a buoyant spirit of cheerfulness and hope.

"In like manner, when you came into my room at the Princess's country-house, the same evil power acquired its full dominion over me. But this persecution is not without its especial cause. Precisely in the same manner in which you entered my apartments, though at a later hour of the night, an accursed monk of the Capuchin order once surprised me. Spare me the repetition of what then occurred. Suffice it, that he became the murderer of my brother; and *now*, your features—your tone of voice—your figure—But no more—no more of this—let me be silent on that subject for ever, and

forgive, if possible, my weakness in this betrayal!"

Aurelia reclined on the sofa on which I had placed her, and seemed unconscious of that freedom with which I now contemplated the exquisite contour of her shape, and the angelic beauty of her features. Once more—all better inspirations—all doubts and fears vanished from my mind—with a fiendlike scorn and contempt, I said in a low voice—"Thou unhappy *fated* girl! Thou bought and sold of Satan! Thou, forsooth, believest that thou hast escaped from thine old enemy—from the Capuchin monk, who long ago would have led thee on to ruin and despair! But *now*, thou art his bride; and in unconscious mockery of the religion which thou cherishest, art doomed to kneel with him at the altar of the Most High!"

The powers of darkness had, for a time, acquired over me supreme dominion. I exulted over Aurelia as my devoted prey, and began to think, like a professed libertine, that her destruction would form the noblest epoch in my life. Our present interview, however, was not suffered to be of long duration, for Aurelia was summoned to attend the Princess, and I was left alone. Her expressions in apologizing for her conduct at the Princess's *chateau*, had convinced me that there existed some mystery betwixt us, of the nature of which I was yet unaware, and which I had not the means of unravelling, for I perceived that there was no chance of inducing Aurelia to speak more explicitly on the subject.

Accident soon after revealed to me that which she had been so determined to conceal. One day I happened to be in the apartment of that officer of the court, whose business it was to take charge of the receipt and delivery of letters. He was suddenly called out, when Aurelia's waiting-maid came with a large packet, and placed it among others which were already on the table. A fleeting glance confirmed me that the hand-writing was that of the Baroness, and I perceived that the superscription was to the Abbess of the Cistertian Nunnery at Kreuzberg. With the rapidity of lightning the thought vibrated through me, that this packet would afford the key to many yet unexplored mysteries, and before the officer returned, I had retired, and taken with me Aurelia's letter—of which now follows a transcript—

Chapter VIII

*

"BARONESS AURELIA VON F—, to the Abbess of the Cistertian Convent at Kreuzberg:—

"My dear kind Mother—How shall I find adequate words to announce to you that your daughter is fortunate and happy—that at length the horrid spectre is banished, whose terrific influence, blighting every flower, and clouding every sun-gleam, had, for a long interval, rendered her existence utterly wretched!

"But now self-reproach falls heavy on my heart. When after my unhappy brother's death, and when my father perished from grief and disappointment, you received and supported me during my otherwise hopeless affliction, I ought then, not only to have confessed my sins, but to have acquainted you fully and explicitly with the strange and mysterious impressions, by which my tranquillity had been broken.

"I was unwilling, however, to disturb you by a detail, which would have seemed rather like the fantastic illusions of a disordered imagination, than reality, and of which the malignant influence then admitted of no cure nor antidote. Circumstances are now changed, and I can freely write to you of that secret, which has so long been deeply concealed in my own breast. It seems to me, indeed, as if that mysterious power by whom I have been haunted, had mocked, like a demon, at my every prospect of happiness! I have been tost about hither and thither, as if on the waves of a stormy sea, and left ever and anon to perish without hope of rescue! Yet Heaven has almost miraculously assisted me, even at the moment when I was on the point of being irrecoverably lost.

"In order to render my disclosures intelligible, I must look back to the period of my earliest recollections, for even at that time, the foundation was laid in my heart of those apprehensions which have since grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength.

"It happened when I was only about four years old, that one day, when the spring season was at its brightest and loveliest, I was busily engaged with Hermogen at play in the castle gardens. Hermogen had run about supplying me with a thousand varieties of flowers, which he also assisted me to weave into garlands, with which I adorned myself, till being completely decked out like a fairy queen, and covered with flowers, I said, 'Now, let me go!—I must shew myself to my mother!'

"Hermogen, as you know, was older than I was, and exercised a kind of authority over his sister. At these words of mine, he started up, 'Stay here, Aurelia,' said he, in a commanding voice—'Thy mother is in her blue closet, and speaks with the devil!' I could not tell what my brother meant by this, but, quite overcome with terror, I began to weep bitterly—'Foolish Aurelia,' said Hermogen, 'wherefore weepest thou?—Your mother speaks every day with the devil. But let us keep out of his way, and he will do us no harm!' He spoke, and looked angrily, so that I was obliged to be silent.

"My mother was even then in very feeble health—she was attacked often by frightful convulsions, which left her in a state of deathlike weakness. This happened once in presence of Hermogen, and myself. We were ordered out of the room, and I wept bitterly; but Hermogen only said, 'It is the devil that has done this to her!'

"Thus the belief was firmly impressed on my mind, that my mother every day held conversations with some frightful spectre, whom, even to look upon, would, to any one else, be death. (As to religious instructions, they were, of course, yet wholly beyond my comprehension.) One day, after rambling through the castle, I was horrified to find myself alone in the blue cabinet which had been alluded to by Hermogen.

"I should instantly have taken refuge in flight, but my mother came in with a deadly paleness on her countenance, and without observing me, (for I stood in a corner,) in a deep melancholy tone, she pronounced the name, 'Francesco—Francesco!' There was then a strange rustling and rattling behind the oak pannels of the wall. The boards began to move, and drew themselves asunder. I then saw a full-length portrait, so admirably painted, that it had all the animation of life, representing a man in a foreign dress, with a dark violet-coloured mantle.

"The figure and expressive countenance of this unknown, made on me an indescribable impression, which I never afterwards forgot. My admiration was such that I could no longer be silent, but uttered an exclamation of joy, which, for the first time, made my mother aware of my presence. Her temper, which was generally mild and equable, was now more ruffled than on any former occasion. —'What would'st thou here, Aurelia?' said she, in an angry tone; 'who brought thee hither?'—'They left me all alone,' cried I, bursting into tears. 'I know not how I came hither, and had no wish to be here!'

"Meanwhile the pannels were again put in motion, and the portrait disappeared.—'Alas!' said I, 'the beautiful picture—Mother, dearest mother, why is it gone?'—The Baroness lifted me up in her arms, and caressed me.—'Thou art my dear good child,' said she; 'but no one must see that picture, nor speak of its having been there. It is now gone, Aurelia, and will never come again!'

"Accordingly, as long as I remembered this warning, I intrusted to no one what I had observed in the mysterious blue cabinet. Only to Hermogen, I once said—'Dearest brother, it is not with the devil, as you supposed, that our mother speaks, but with a young handsome man. However, he is only a picture, and starts out of the wall when she calls for him.'—'The devil,' answered Hermogen, with a fixed serious look, 'may look as he will,—so says our father confessor. But as to the Baroness, he dare no longer trouble her!'—Horror seized on me at these words, and I begged of Hermogen, that he never would speak of the devil again.

"Soon after this we went to the *residenz*, and the picture *almost* vanished from my remembrance; nor did I think of it till after my mother's death, when we came back to the country. The wing of the castle in which was that blue cabinet, remained uninhabited. Here had been my late mother's favourite apartments; and my father could not enter them without suffering from the most painful recollections.

"At last, after an interval of several years, it became necessary to order some repairs in that wing; and being now in my fourteenth year, restless and wild, I happened to come into the blue cabinet, just at the time when the workmen were about to tear up the floor. When one of them was in the act of lifting a heavy table, which stood in the middle of the room, there was a strange noise heard behind the wall, the pannels burst asunder, and the portrait of the unknown again became visible.

"On examination, they discovered a spring in the floor, which being pressed down, brought into motion certain machinery behind the wainscot, which was accordingly drawn aside, as already described, so as to exhibit the picture. Once more that extraordinary event of my childhood was brought vividly to my remembrance; and, at the recollection of my beloved mother, tears started into my eyes. Yet I could not turn away my looks from the expressive and interesting features of the unknown, which were so admirably painted, that they seemed more like life and reality, than any work of art. Above all, his eyes were so animated, that their glance seemed to penetrate into my very soul.

"Probably the workmen had sent word to my father, of the discovery which they had made; for while I yet stood gazing on the unknown, he hastily entered the room. He had scarcely cast a fleeting glance on the picture, when he appeared almost petrified by some mysterious emotion, and murmured to himself, in a deep tone, the name '*Francesco!*'—

"Then suddenly, as if awoke from a painful reverie, he turned round to the workmen, and, with a stern voice, commanded them, that they should directly tear the painting from the wall, roll it up, and give it in charge to Reinhold. I was greatly distressed by this order. It

seemed to me as if I should never more behold that form, so heroic, noble, and interesting; who, in his foreign garb, appeared to me almost like some prince of the spiritual world! Yet an unconquerable timidity prevented me from requesting of my father, that he would not allow the portrait to be destroyed.

"In a few days, however, these impressions altogether vanished; nor did they recur till after a long interval. I was now carried away by the volatility and light-heartedness of youth. A thousand sports, of my own devising, every day engaged my attention; and my father often said, that Hermogen, at this time, had the quiet, timid manners of a well-behaved girl; while I, on the contrary, behaved like a wild romping boy!

"These characteristics, however, were soon to be changed. Hermogen was already past the years of adolescence, and began to devote his whole attention to his own professional pursuits as a young soldier. He thought only of hardening his frame to endure every possible fatigue—of parades and reviews—of military tactics —above all, of actual service in time of danger; and in these views, his father (having determined on his son's destination) wholly concurred.

"For my part, my whole existence now underwent a complete revolution, which I was then unable to interpret, and which I yet cannot adequately describe. The solitude in which I lived probably contributed to heighten every fantastic impression. If any new feeling arose within me, being wholly undiverted by any external influence, or by the usual dissipations of society to which others can have recourse, it naturally grew into excess. I became thoughtful, melancholy, nervous, and discontented. By night, I was visited by strange and unaccountable dreams; and during the day, I was, by fits, extravagantly merry, or, on the slightest provocation, burst into a passion of tears.

"My father observed these changes, which he ascribed to irritability of nerves, and called in a physician, who prescribed for me all sorts of remedies, without the slightest good effect. At this time—I know not myself how it could have happened—but one night the half-forgotten image of the unknown appeared before me, in colours so vivid and lively, that he was no longer a dead phantom on canvass, but a corporeal and living being, who gazed on me with an aspect of kindness and compassion.

"'Alas!' cried I, 'must I then die? What is it by which I am thus so unspeakably tormented?'—'Thou lovest me, Aurelia,' said the vision, 'and this is the cause of thy present illness and distraction. But canst thou dissolve the vows of one already devoted to heaven?' To my astonishment, I now perceived that the unknown wore the robes of a monk.

"Summoning my whole strength, I endeavoured to break the spells with which the detestable dream had fettered my senses; and, for the present moment, I succeeded in this; but I could not prevent the same phantom from recurring to my imagination, and persecuting me with tenfold power. I perceived only too well, that for me the mysteries of a first love were revealed,—that, with a passionate fervour, of which only the youthful heart is capable, I was attached to the nameless and visionary unknown! My indisposition seemed, however, to have attained its crisis, and I became perceptibly better. My nervous irritability decreased, and I was able again to mix in society; only the constant presence of that image, my fantastic love of a being who existed only in my own brain, rendered me so *distraite*, that I frequently gave absurd answers when questioned; and being wholly wrapt up in my own reveries, must have appeared to others either an affected prude, or an unidea'd simpleton.

"About this time, I had found, among other romances, in my brother's room, one containing the history of a monk, who, being overcome by temptations of the devil, renounced his vows, and fell in love with a young lady, who in consequence perished miserably. This I read with avidity, and though the lessons that it contained might have been expected to open my eyes to the dangers which I was drawing on myself, yet it had an effect directly the reverse, by fixing my attention more and more on those visions which I ought to have banished for ever from my mind. Frequently I thought of Hermogen's words—'Thy mother speaks with the devil;' and began to think, that the unknown was, in truth, an agent of the Arch-fiend, employed to entice me to destruction. Yet I could not cease to love him; and when Reinhold came back, on one occasion, from a journey, and talked much of a certain Brother Medardus, whom he had heard preach in the town of Königswald, there arose within me an obscure dim apprehension, that the original of the beloved and yet dreaded vision might be that very Medardus; and this belief Reinhold's description of the preacher's features and person seemed amply to sanction. Thereafter, the wild dreams and internal conflicts by which I was persecuted, were increased tenfold. It happened that a monk (as was often the case) came to visit at my father's house; and this person chose, in a very diffuse lecture, to describe the manifold temptations of the devil, and the wretched delusions to which especially youthful minds were subjected, if they did not sufficiently resist his influence. My father seemed to approve of this discourse, and I believed it was aimed particularly at me.—'Only unbounded trust and confidence,' said the clergyman, 'not only in religion, but in her servants, and submissive obedience to their injunctions and advice, can afford hopes of rescue.'

"Not long after this, I accompanied my father to the town of Königswald, whither he went to attend a law process which Reinhold had been unable to finish alone. We lived at the garden-house of the Graf van M—, which is close by the celebrated chapel of the Capuchin Convent; and remembering the lecture which I had

heard just before leaving home, I resolved not to lose that opportunity of fulfilling the sacred duty of confession."

[10]

Chapter IX

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Repeatedly, and with the greatest attention, I read over this letter of Aurelia, especially the latter pages, in which there was obviously displayed so much of true piety and confiding simplicity of heart, that, at our next meeting, I was unable to continue my addresses in the tone and manner in which I had before indulged. Aurelia remarked this change in my conduct; and, struck with remorse, I penitentially confessed to her my robbery of her letter addressed to the Lady Abbess—(which, however, I had duly sealed and forwarded)—excusing myself on the principle, that some mysterious and supernatural impulse had forced me to this deed, against which it was impossible to contend. I insisted also, that a similar influence, emanating from some high and inexplicable source, had already shadowed forth to me in visions some of the principal incidents in her life, which the perusal of the letter, therefore, had only confirmed and realized.—"As a proof," said I, "of the intellectual sympathy existing betwixt us, I could long ere now have informed you of a wonderful dream by which I was myself visited, in which you confessed to me your love; but methought I was transformed into a miserable monk, whose heart, instead of being rejoiced by such good fortune, was torn by remorse and self-reproach. I loved you, indeed, with the utmost fervour; but my love was mortal sin; for I had regularly taken the vows of a Capuchin; and you, Aurelia, were metamorphosed into the blessed St Rosalia."

At these words Aurelia started up in affright. "For God's sake, Leonard," said she, "say no more! Our lives are mutually obscured by some frightful and impenetrable mystery; and the less we endeavour to break through the veil by which it is now wrapt in darkness, the better. Who knows what insupportable horrors may be therein concealed? Let us think no more of such frightful inquiries, but rely firmly on each other. That you have read my letter to the Abbess no doubt surprises and vexes me. But what is done cannot be retrieved. As to its contents, I would willingly have imparted them to you *viva voce*, if I had known that it was to serve any good purpose, for no secrets dare exist betwixt us. But to say the truth, Leonard, it appears to me that you yourself struggle against the evil influence of much that is wrapt up in your own bosom, and which, on account of false shame, you do not allow to pass your lips. If possible, be for the future sincere! How much would your heart be lightened by a free confession, and as to our attachment, its bonds would thereby be strengthened tenfold!"

At these words of Aurelia, I felt in all its bitterness the torment of conscious deception and hypocrisy. I reflected with the keenest self-reproach, how, only a few moments before, I had voluntarily practised imposition against this pious simple-hearted girl; and an almost unconquerable impulse arose within me to confess to her *all*—even the worst that I could utter against myself, and yet methought I should not even then lose her affection!

"Aurelia! my guardian angel, who rescued me from—" I had thus even begun my confession, when the Princess abruptly entered the room, and produced an entire change, not only in my behaviour, but in my feelings. Her manner, as usual, was haughty and ceremonious. I met her with all the outward forms of respect, but internally with emotions of scorn and defiance. As the acknowledged bridegroom of Aurelia, she was now obliged to bear with me, and I boldly kept my place, though I perceived that her aversion to me was by no means abated. In truth, it was only when alone with Aurelia that I was now free from all wicked thoughts and impulses. At such moments, the beatitude of Heaven seemed to descend on me, and I began once more to wish anxiously for our marriage, in despite of every obstacle.

About this time it came to pass that a remarkable dream one night greatly disturbed my rest, by the recollection of which I continued for several days to be haunted. Methought the figure of my mother stood vividly before me, and when I wished to salute and welcome her, I perceived it was but an aerial phantom which assumed her features, and mocked my filial embrace. "To what purpose this absurd deception?" cried I, angrily—"Thou delusive shadow, what would'st thou here?"

Then methought my mother wept bitterly. The tears that she shed were changed into bright dazzling stars which floated through the air, and began to form a circle round my head; but ever and anon, a black frightful hand, like that of a demon, with long claws, broke the circle as soon as it was nearly formed. "Thou, whom I brought pure and sinless into the world," said my mother, "and whose infancy and youth I watched over with such care, hast thou lost all energy and self-command, that thou submittest, like a grovelling slave, to every enticement of Satan? Now, indeed, I can look into thine inmost heart, since the load of earthly existence, under which I have long struggled, is taken from my shoulders. Rouse thyself, Franciscus! Resist the fiend that besets thee, and he will flee! I shall once more adorn thee, as in early days, with ribbons and flowers, for St Bernard's day is come, and thou shalt again be a pious and happy child!"

Now it seemed to me as if, in obedience to my mother's admonition, I must once more begin singing one of the lovely anthems which I had learned in my youth, but frightful and indescribable noises overpowered my voice. My attempts at music were like the howling of a wild beast; and betwixt me and my phantom visitant there fell, rustling and undulating, the folds of a massy black veil, supported by the spectral arms of demons, with long hideous talons. Thus ended my dream.

Two days afterwards, I happened to meet in the park the chief judge of the criminal court, who came up to me in a very friendly manner, and entered into conversation.

"Do you know," said he, "that the final issue of Medardus's trial has again become very doubtful? Judgment of death had nearly been pronounced against him, indeed was all but carried into effect, when he again shewed symptoms of madness. The court received intelligence of the death of his mother. I made this known to him. Then he laughed aloud like a maniac, and

in a tone which would have inspired the stoutest heart with horror—'The Duchess of Neuenburg!' said he, (naming the wife of the late Duke, brother of our Sovereign,)—'She is long since dead. If this is all the intelligence you had to bring, the trouble might have been spared!'

"In consequence of this paroxysm, the execution of the sentence is delayed, and a new medical inquiry set on foot. However, it is generally believed that his madness is only pretended, and that his condemnation is therefore inevitable."

I afterwards obtained information of the day and hour of my mother's death, and found that these corresponded exactly with the time at which she had appeared to me in that remarkable vision.

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The day which the Prince had appointed for our marriage was at last arrived; and the ceremony was to take place in the morning, at the altar of St Rosalia, in the church of a neighbouring convent, which (I know not for what reason) Aurelia preferred to the Prince's chapel. I passed the preceding night in watching and prayer.—Alas! I did not reflect that prayer under such circumstances, and cherishing such intentions in my heart, was only adding by blasphemy to my previous guilt.

When I went to Aurelia, she came, dressed in white, and wearing roses as her only ornament, to meet me. Never had she looked more beautiful; but in the fashion of her dress, and in the flower wreaths that she had chosen, there was something that inspired me with strange and mysterious recollections, which I knew not how to define. At the same moment I remembered that the painting over the altar, at which the marriage ceremony was to take place, represented the martyrdom of St Rosalia, and that the saint was there dressed precisely as Aurelia now appeared, whereupon my whole frame was shaken with horrid and uncontrollable apprehensions, which it was hardly in my power to conceal.

We had no time for conversation, however. Scarcely had I saluted Aurelia, when a servant of the Prince announced that we were waited for by the wedding-party. She quickly drew on her gloves, and gave me her arm. Then one of her attendants remarked that some ringlets of her hair had fallen loose, and begged for a moment's delay. Aurelia seemed vexed at the interruption, but waited accordingly.

At that moment a hollow rumbling noise, and a tumult of voices on the street, attracted our attention. At Aurelia's request I hastened to the window. There, just before the palace, was a *leiter-wagen*, which, on account of some obstacle, had stopped in the street. The car was surrounded by the executioners of justice; and within it, I perceived the horrible monk, who sat looking backwards, while before him was a capuchin, earnestly engaged in prayer. His countenance was deadly pale, and again disfigured by a grizzly beard, but the features of my detestable *double* were to me but too easily recognizable.

When the carriage, that had been for a short space interrupted by the crowd, began to roll on, he seemed awoke from his reverie, and turning up his staring spectral eyes towards me, instantly became animated. He laughed and howled aloud—"*Brüd-er-lein—Brüd-er-lein!*" cried he.—"Bride-groom!—Bride-groom!—Come quickly—come quickly.—Up—up to the roof of the house. There the owl holds his wedding-feast; the weather-cock sings aloud! There shall we contend together, and whoever casts the other down, is king, and may drink blood!"

The howling voice in which he uttered these words, the glare of his eyes, and the horrible writhings of his visage, that was like that of an animated corse, were more than, weakened as I was by previous agitation, I was able to withstand. From that moment I lost all self-possession; I became also utterly insane, and unconscious what I did! At first I tried to speak calmly. "Horrible wretch!" said I; "what mean'st thou? What would'st thou from me?"

Then I grinned, jabbered, and howled back to the madman; and Aurelia, in an agony of terror, broke from her attendants, and ran up to me. With all her strength, she seized my arms, and endeavoured to draw me from the window. "For God's sake," cried she, "leave that horrible spectacle; they are dragging Medardus, the murderer of my brother, to the scaffold. Leonard!—Leonard!"

Then all the demons of hell seemed awoke within me, and manifested, in its utmost extent, that power which they are allowed to exercise over an obdurate and unrepentant sinner. With reckless cruelty I repulsed Aurelia, who trembled, as if shook by convulsions, in every limb.—"Ha—ha—ha!" I almost shrieked aloud—"foolish, insane girl! I myself, thy lover, thy chosen bridegroom, am the murderer of thy brother! Would'st thou by thy complaints bring down destruction from heaven on thy sworn husband?—Ho—ho—ho! I am king—I am king—and will drink blood!"

I drew out the stiletto—I struck at Aurelia,—blood streamed over my arm and hand, and she fell lifeless at my feet. I rushed down stairs,—forced my way through the crowd to the carriage—seized the monk by the collar, and with supernatural strength tore him from the car. Then I was arrested by the executioner; but with the stiletto in my hand, I defended myself so furiously, that I broke loose, and rushed into the thick of the mob, where, in a few moments, I found myself wounded by a stab in the side; but the people were struck with such terror, that I made my way through them as far as to the neighbouring wall of the park, which, by a frightful effort, I leapt over.

"Murder—murder!—Stop—stop the murderer!" I had fallen down, almost fainting, on the other side of the wall, but these outcries instantly gave me new strength. Some were knocking with great violence, in vain endeavours to break open one of the park gates, which, not being the regular entrance, was always kept closed. Others were striving to clamber over the wall, which I had cleared by an incredible leap. I rose, and exerting my utmost speed, ran forward. I came, ere long, to a broad *fosse*, by which the park was separated from the adjoining forest. By another tremendous effort, I jumped over, and continued to run on through the wood, until at last I sank down, utterly exhausted, under a tree.

I know not how the time had passed, but it was already evening, and dark shadows reigned through the forest, when I came again to my recollection. My progress in running so far had passed over like an obscure dream. I recollect only the wind roaring amid the dense canopy of the trees, and that many times I mistook some old moss-grown pollard stem for an officer of justice, armed and ready to seize upon me!

When I awoke from the swoon and utter stupefaction into which I had fallen, my first impulse was merely to set out again, like a hunted wild beast, and fly, if possible, from my pursuers to the very end of the earth! As soon, however, as I was only past the frontiers of the Prince's dominions, I would certainly be safe from all immediate persecution.

I rose accordingly, but scarcely had I advanced a few steps, when there was a violent rustling in the thicket; and from thence, in a state of the most vehement rage and excitement, sprung the monk, who, no doubt in consequence of the disturbance that I had raised, had contrived to make his escape from the guards and executioners.

In a paroxysm of madness he flew towards me, leaping through the bushes like a tiger, and finally sprung upon my shoulders, clasping his arms about my throat, so that I was almost suffocated. Under any other circumstances, I would have instantly freed myself from such an attack, but I was enfeebled to the last degree by the exertions I had undergone, and all that I could attempt was to render this feebleness subservient to my rescue. I fell down under his weight, and endeavoured to take advantage of that event. I rolled myself on the ground, and grappled with him; but in vain! I could not disengage myself, and my infernal double laughed scornfully. His abominable accents, "He—he—he!—He—he—he!" sounded amid the desolate loneliness of the woods.

During this contest, the moon broke, only for a moment, through the clouds, for the night was gloomy and tempestuous. Then, as her silvery gleam slanted through the dark shade of the pine trees, I beheld, in all its horror, the deadly pale visage of my *second self*, with the same expression which had glared out upon me from the cart in which he had been dragged to execution. "He—he—he—Broth-er, broth-er!—Ever, ever I am with thee!—Leave thee, leave thee never!—Cannot run as thou canst! Must carry—carry me! Come straight from the gallows—They would have nailed me to the wheel—He—he—he!—He—he—he!"

Thus the infernal spectre howled and laughed aloud as we lay on the ground; but ere the fleeting moonbeam had passed away, I was roused once more to furious rage. I sprang up like a bear in the embraces of a boa-constrictor, and ran with my utmost force against trees and fragments of rock, so that if I could not kill him, I might at least wound him in such manner that he would be under the necessity of letting me go. But in vain. He only laughed the more loudly and scornfully; and my personal sufferings were increased tenfold by my endeavours to end them.

I then strove with my whole remaining strength to burst asunder his hands, which were firmly knotted round my throat, but the supernatural energies of

the monster threatened me with strangulation. At last, after a furious conflict, he suddenly fell, as if lifeless, on the ground: and though scarcely able to breathe, I had run onwards for some yards, when again he sat upon my shoulders, laughing as before, and stammering out the same horrible words. Of new succeeded the same efforts of despairing rage! Of new I was freed! Then again locked in the embraces of this demoniacal spectre!

After this I lost all consciousness.—I am utterly unable to say distinctly how long I was persecuted by my relentless *double*. It seems to me as if my struggles must have continued at least during a whole month; and that during this long period I neither ate nor drank. I remember only *one* lucid interval. All the rest is utter darkness.

I had just succeeded in throwing off my double, when a clear gleam of sunlight brightened the woods, and with it a pleasant sound of bells rose on mine ear. I distinguished unequivocally the chimes of a convent, which rung for early mass. For a moment I rejoiced; but then the thought came like annihilation upon me—"Thou hast murdered Aurelia!" and once more losing all self-possession and recollection, I fell in despair upon the earth.

Chapter X

*

Methought the air in which I breathed had a mildness and fragrance such as now I had never known; but, as yet, I was labouring under the influence of a deep and morbid slumber. I felt a strange irritation, a shooting prickly pain in every vein and fibre, till it seemed as if my frame was split and divided an hundred fold, and every division thence arising assumed a peculiar and individual principle of life, while the head in vain strove to command the limbs, which, like unfaithful vassals, would not submit themselves to its dominion.

Then, methought, each of these separated parts became a glittering fiery point, which began to turn itself round in a circle, till hundreds of them, whirling rapidly together, formed at last the appearance of a fixed ball of fire, which darted forth flames and coruscations. "These are my limbs which are thus moving," said I to myself; "now I am for certain about to awake."

At that moment, when the fiery ball was turning round, I felt sudden and violent pain, and distinctly heard the sound of a clear chime of bells. "Away, away—Onward, onward!" cried I, believing myself still in the wood, and making a vehement effort to rise up, but I fell back powerless on my couch. Now, for the first time, I was restored to perfect consciousness, and saw, with great surprise, that I was no longer in the forest. In the dress of a Capuchin monk, I lay upon a well-stuffed mattress. The room was vaulted and lofty; a pair of rush-bottomed chairs, and a small table, stood beside my bed.

I concluded that my state of unconsciousness must have continued for a long time, and that, while in that unhappy situation, I must have been brought to some convent or other, where the monks were, by their rule, obliged to receive the sick. Probably my clothes had been torn, and they had been obliged, for the meanwhile, to supply me with a cowl. However this might be, there was no doubt that I had escaped from all immediate danger. I was also free from pain, though very weak, therefore continued quite tranquil, having no doubt that my protectors would, in due time, look after their charge.

Accordingly, it was not long before I heard steps that seemed, from their sound, to approach through a long stone-floored gallery. My door opened, and I saw two men, of whom one had a lay dress, the other wore the habit of the brethren of charity. They came up to me in silence; the man in the lay dress fixed his eyes on me, and seemed much astonished. "I am again come to myself, sir," said I, in a weak voice. "Heaven be praised, who has restored to me my reason. But will you be so good as to inform me where I am, and how I have been brought hither?"

Without answering me, the physician (as I supposed him to be) turned to the clergyman, and said, in Italian, "This is indeed very extraordinary. His looks are, since our last visit, completely changed. His speech is quite clear, only weak. Some particular crisis must have taken place in his malady."

"For my part," said the monk, "I have no doubt that he is completely cured."

"Of that," said the physician, "we cannot judge, until we have seen how he may conduct himself for the next few days. But do you not understand as much German as to speak with him?"

The monk answered in the negative.

"I understand and speak Italian," interrupted I. "Tell me, then, I beseech you, where I am, and how I found my way hither?"

"Ha!" cried the physician, "our difficulties are then at an end. You find yourself, reverend sir, in a place where every possible precaution has been, and will be taken, for your perfect recovery. Three months ago you were brought hither in a very critical and dangerous situation; but, under our care and attention, you seem to have made great progress towards convalescence; and if we shall have the good fortune to complete your cure, you may then freely pursue your journey, for, as I have understood, you wish to go to Rome."

"Did I come to you, then," said I, "in this Capuchin dress which I now wear?"

"Truly you did so," said the physician; "but give over, I pray you, this asking of questions, and do not disquiet yourself—everything shall, in due time, be explained to your satisfaction. Our business at present is to attend to your bodily health."

He then felt my pulse, and the monk, who had for a moment disappeared, returned with a cup full of some liquid, which the physician desired me to drink, and then to tell him what I thought it was. I obeyed, and told him that what I had drunk seemed to me a strong and nourishing meat-broth. "Good—very good," said the monk, with a smile of satisfaction. They then left me alone, with a promise of returning in a short time.

Through the next three days, I was attended with the utmost skill and kindness by the brethren and the physician. I continued rapidly to improve, and at the end of that time was able to rise up, and, leaning on the monk's arm, to walk through the room. He led me to the window and opened the lattice. A delightfully warm and fragrant (but not sultry) air, such as till then I had never breathed, came in at the window. Without, I beheld an extensive garden, wherein all sorts of fruit-trees grew, and flourished in the highest luxuriance. There were also delightful arbours, bowers, and temples; while, even around the window from which I looked, the grapes hung in rich massy clusters. Above all, however, it was, with the clear cloudless blue of the sky that I was altogether enchanted. I could not find words to express my admiration.

"Where am I then?" cried I. "Have the blessed saints granted to a wretched sinner to dwell in their Elysium?"

The monk smiled contentedly at my raptures. "You are in Italy, brother," said he.

"In Italy!" repeated I, with the utmost astonishment. I then urged the clergyman to explain to me more particularly how I could have found my way to such a distance. He referred me to the physician, who just then entered, and who at last informed me, that a strange man of most eccentric manners had brought me hither about three months ago, and begged that I might be taken into their house; that, finally, I was in a regular hospital, which was taken charge of by the brethren of charity.

As I gradually gained more strength, I found that the monk and physician willingly entered into conversation with me on various subjects of literature and the arts. The latter, as if in order to obtain information for himself, even requested me to write down many things which he afterwards read over in my presence; but I was puzzled by observing that, instead of praising what I had written on its own account, he only said, "Indeed?—This looks well!—I have not been deceived—Excellent—excellent!"

I was now allowed at certain hours to walk in the garden, where, however, I was greatly discomposed by the sight of strange spectral figures, who, as if quite unable to take care of themselves, were led about by the monks. Once, in particular, I was struck by the appearance of a tall haggard man, in a dingy yellow mantle, who was led by two of the brethren, one on each side, and in this manner met me as I was returning to the house. At every step, he made the most absurd gesticulations, as if he were about to commence a *pas seul*, at the same time whistling shrilly an accompaniment.

Astonished at this, I stood gazing on the man, but the monk by whom I was attended drew me suddenly away. "Come, come, dear brother Medardus!" said he, "that is no business of yours!"

"For God's sake," said I, "tell me how is it that you know anything of my name?"

The vehemence with which I put this question seemed to discompose my attendant. "For what reason," said he, "should we not know your name? The man by whom you were brought hither, named you without hesitation, and you were accordingly entered in the list of the house—Medardus, brother of the Capuchin Convent at Königswald."

Once more I felt the ice-cold shuddering of terror vibrate in every limb. But whoever was the unknown by whom I had been brought to the hospital, whether he were or were not initiated in the horrible mysteries of my life, he certainly had not cherished any evil intentions towards me, for I had been treated with the greatest care and tenderness, and was, besides, at liberty to go whereever I wished.

After this walk, I had returned to my chamber, and was leaning out at the open window inhaling the delightful fragrance of the air, which seemed to inspire me with new life and energy in every fibre, when I beheld in the garden a man coming up the middle walk, whom I thought that I had seen before, but could not immediately recollect where.

He was a diminutive withered figure, had upon his head a small hat with a long peaked crown, and was dressed in a miserable weather-beaten surtout. In his gait, he rather danced than walked; nay, every now and then cut a caper right up into the air; and anon, started off to one side, as if he were possessed by the demon of St Vitus. Occasionally he made a full stop, and at one of these intervals, perceiving me at the window, he took off his high-peaked hat, and waved it in the air, then kissed his hand repeatedly, with an emphasis of gesticulation which at once confirmed and cleared up my recollection. There was but one individual in the world who could have practised these manoeuvres, and that was Belcampo! He vanished, however, among the trees; but, not long afterwards, I heard a particular rap at the door, of which the style and manner immediately taught me whom I was to expect.

"Schönfeld!" said I, as he indeed made his appearance; "how, in the name of wonder, have you found your way hither?"

"Ach—ach!" said he, twisting his face, as if he were about to weep—"how should I have come hither otherwise than driven and hurled onwards as I was by that malignant and relentless destiny, which never fails to persecute every man of true genius. On account of a murder, I was obliged to fly from the rich and flourishing town of Frankenburg."

"On account of a murder!—What would'st thou say?" interrupted I, with considerable agitation.

"Ay, truly," answered he—"on account of a murder. I had, in a fit of wrath, immolated the left whisker of the youngest *Commerziensrath* in that free town, and had also dangerously wounded the right mustachio."

"Once more," said I, "I must beg of you to give up these absurd and unmeaning jokes, and to tell your story connectedly, otherwise you had better leave the room."

"Nay, dear brother Medardus," he resumed, "this is indeed unforeseen and unaccountable; now that you are restored to health, you would send me from you in disgrace; but, as long as you were ill, you were glad to have me for a companion in your room, and to be always near to you."

"What does all this mean?" cried I, quite confounded; "and how have you got to the knowledge of my name Medardus?"

"Look," said he, with an ironical smile, "if you please, at the right-hand lappelle of your monk's cowl."

I did so, and became almost petrified with terror and astonishment, for I found the name "Medardus" embroidered thereupon; and, on more accurate inspection, I could discover also that this was the identical tunic which, on my flight from the castle of the Baron von F—, I had thrown into a hollow tree in the forest.

Schönfeld did not fail to remark my agitation, over which he seemed wickedly to triumph. With his fore-finger on his nose, and lifting himself on tiptoe, he looked stedfastly in my face. I remained speechless; then, in a low and pensive tone, he resumed—

"Your excellency, no doubt, wonders at the handsome dress which has been chosen for you. To say the truth, it seemed in every respect to fit and become you better than the nut-brown suit, with plated buttons, which my wise friend Damon supplied for you. It was I, the banished, the despised and misunderstood Belcampo, who provided for you this dress, in order to cover your nakedness. Brother Medardus, you were then, indeed, but in a sorry plight, for, instead of great-coat, vest, pantaloons, English frock, &c. &c. you wore, in the simplest, and most unpretending manner, your own skin. As to a proper friseur, you thought as little of him as you did of a tailor, performing his functions with your own ten fingers, in a style which was by no means to be commended."

"Give over these disgusting follies," said I, much incensed; "Schönfeld—I insist on your being rational, otherwise I will hear no more!"

"Pietro Belcampo is my name," interrupted he, with great vehemence; "Ay, Pietro Belcampo; for we are now in Italy, and you must know, reverend sir, that I, simple as I here stand, impersonize that folly, which luckily has been present on every disastrous occasion, to assist your wisdom; and without which, you would have found yourself miserably deficient. It is from Folly alone that you have derived protection. By this alone your boasted reason, which is unable to hold itself upright, but totters about like a drunk man or a child, has been supported, and instructed to find the right road home, that is to say, to the mad-house, where we are both happily arrived."

By these last words I was much agitated. I thought on the strange figures that I had seen, especially on the tall haggard man in the dingy yellow mantle, who had made such absurd gesticulations; and could entertain no doubt that Schönfeld had told me the truth. "Ay, dear brother Medardus," resumed Schönfeld, with solemn voice and gestures; "Folly is, indeed, on this earth, the true intellectual queen. Reason, on the other hand, is only a pitiful viceroy, who never troubles himself with what happens beyond his own narrow boundaries, who, from sheer *ennui*, indeed, makes his soldiers be exercised on the *parade-platz*, though the said soldiers afterwards, in time of danger, cannot fire a single volley in proper time. But Folly, the true queen of the people, marches in with kettle-drums and trumpets—Huzza! Huzza!—before and behind her, triumph and rejoicing! The lieges straightway emancipate themselves from the constraint in which Reason would have held them, and will no longer stand or walk as their pedantic tutor would have them to do. At last he calls the roll, and complains,—'Lo! Folly hath robbed

me of my best recruits—hath driven them away—driven their wits a wool-gathering—ay, driven them mad.' That is a play of words, dear brother Medardus, and such play is like a glowing pair of curling-irons in the hand of Folly, with which she can twist such a thought!"

"Desist, I once more entreat of you," said I, "desist from this childish clatter of unmeaning words, and tell me concisely how you came hither, and what you know regarding the dress which I now wear!" Hereupon I seized him by both arms, and forced him into a chair, where he seemed to recollect himself, fixed his eyes stedfastly on the ground, and with a deep sigh resumed,—

"I have saved your life," said he, "for the second time. It was I who enabled you to escape from the town of Frankenburg. It was I, too, who brought you hither."

"But, in the name of Heaven," said I, "where did you last find me?"

I had let him go, and he instantly bolted up—"Ha, brother Medardus," said he, "if I, weak and diminutive as I seem, had not contrived to bear you on my shoulders, your limbs would by this time, have lain the food of ravens on the wheel!"

I shuddered as if ready to faint, and sunk into a chair. At that moment my attendant monk entered the room. "How hast thou come hither? Who gave thee liberty now to enter this room?" said he, very angrily, to Belcampo.

"Alas! venerable father," said the latter, in a supplicating tone, and pretending to burst into tears, "I could no longer resist the vehement impulse to visit my dearest friend, whom I had rescued from danger of death!"

I now recovered myself. "Tell me, brother," said I to the monk, "did this man really bring me hither?"

The monk hesitated.

"I scarcely know," said I, "in what sort of hospital I am now protected, but I can easily suppose that I have been in the most frightful of all conditions. You perceive, however, that I am now quite well, and therefore, I may hear all which was before intentionally concealed from me, when you supposed that my nerves were yet too irritable."

Chapter XI

*

"It is, indeed, quite true," said the monk, "this man brought you hither about three months and a half ago. He had, according to his own account, found you in the Lovanian forest, (which separates the dominions of the Prince of Laguria, from our district,) and had recognized you for the Capuchin Medardus from Königswald, who had before, on a journey to Rome, passed through a town where he then lived.

"When first brought among us, you were in a state of utter apathy. You walked when you were led, remained standing if one let you alone, and seated or laid yourself down according as you were put into the required position. Food and drink we were obliged to pour down your throat; as to words, you were able only to utter hollow unintelligible sounds, and your eyes appeared to stare, without the power of distinguishing any object. Belcampo then never left you, but was your faithful attendant. After an interval of about a month, you fell into a state of outrageous madness, and we were obliged to place you in one of the cells appropriated for persons in that frightful malady. You were then like a ferocious wild beast; but I dare not describe your sufferings more minutely, as the picture might be too painful. After some weeks, your state of apathy again returned, and seemed more obstinate than ever, but at last, God be praised, you awoke from your stupefaction, into your present convalescence."

Schönfeld had, during this narrative of the monk, seated himself, as if in deep reflection, leaning his head on his hand. "Ay, truly," he resumed, "I know that I am sometimes little better than a self-conceited fool; but the air of the mad-house, destructive to reasonable people, has on me had a very beneficial influence. I begin to speculate on my own errors, which is no bad sign. If, generally speaking, I exist only through my own self-consciousness, it is only requisite that this consciousness should pull off the fool's motley coat, and I shall shew myself to the world, a very wise, rational gentleman. But, oh, heavens! is not a genial friseur, according to the principles of his character and profession, a privileged fool and coxcomb? Such folly is, in truth, a protection from all madness; and I can assure you, reverend sir, that in a north-west wind, I can distinguish very well between a church-tower and a lamp-post!"

"If this be really the case," said I, "give us a proof of it now by a quiet rational narrative, how you discovered me in the wood, and brought me to this house."

"That shall immediately be done," said Belcampo, "though the reverend father on my right hand looks at me with a very suspicious aspect. You must know, then, that on the morning after your escape from Frankenburg, the

foreign painter, with his collection of pictures, had also, in an inconceivable manner, vanished; and although the disturbance that you had raised at first excited a good deal of notice, yet, in the stream of other events, and the bustle of the fair, it was ere long forgotten. It was not till after the murder at the castle of the Baron von F— became generally talked of, and the magistracy of that district published handbills, offering a reward for the arrest of Medardus, a Capuchin monk in Königswald, that people were reminded of the painter having indeed told the whole story, and recognized in you the said brother Medardus.

"The landlord of the hotel wherein you had lodged, confirmed a supposition that had already got afloat, of my having been accessory to your flight. The people, therefore, fixed their attention on me, and would have thrown me into prison. Having long wished to quit for ever the miserable course of life that I had been dragging on, my resolution was, in consequence, very speedily adopted. I determined to go into Italy, where there are *Abbatés* with powdered wigs, and encouragement is yet afforded to an accomplished *friseur*. On my way thither I saw you in the *residenz* of the Prince von Rosenthurm. The people there talked of your marriage with the Baroness Aurelia, and of the condemnation and execution of the monk Medardus.

"I had also an opportunity of seeing this criminal monk, and whatever his history might have been, I was convinced at once that you were the true Medardus. I placed myself in your way, but you did not observe me, and I left the Prince's *residenz*, in order to follow out my own plans.

"After a long and fatiguing journey, I had taken up my night's rest at a small obscure hamlet. In the morning I rose very early, as was the custom of the inhabitants there, and prepared to continue my laborious progress through a forest, which lay in gloomy darkness before me. Just as the first gleams of the morning had begun to break through the clouds of the east, there was a rustling in the thickets, and a man, with his hair matted, and staring out in various directions, his beard, too, in the same disorder, but wearing an elegant modern suit of clothes, leaped past me!

"His looks were wild and outrageous, and I gazed after him with the greatest astonishment, but in a moment he had disappeared again in the thick of the tangled coppice, and I could see no more of him. I walked onwards, therefore; but what words can express the horror that I felt, when right before me I saw a naked human figure stretched out flat upon the ground! There seemed to me no doubt that a murder had been committed, and that the fugitive whom I had before seen was the murderer.

"I knelt down beside the naked man, recognized at once your features, and perceived that you still breathed. Close beside you lay the Capuchin habit, which at this moment you are wearing. With much labour and stratagem I contrived to dress you in it, and to drag you along with me. At last you awoke out of your deep swoon, but you remained in that frightful state of apathy in which this reverend gentleman has described you.

"It cost me no little exertion to get you dragged along, and consequently it was not till late in the evening that I was able to reach an ale-house, which

was situated in the middle of the forest. Here I placed you upon a bench of turf at the door, where you lay as if utterly overcome and drunk with sleep. I then went into the house to procure you food and drink, and, found (as I suspected might be the case) a party of hussars, who, as the hostess informed me, were in pursuit of a monk, who, in an inconceivable manner, had escaped at the moment when, on account of his enormous crimes, preparations were making for his death on the scaffold.

"It was to me an inexplicable mystery how you could have escaped out of the *residenz* into the forest; but the entire conviction that you were the Medardus whom they now sought after, made me exert myself to the utmost to rescue you from the danger which now hovered over you. Of course, I brought you away directly from the ale-house, in which undertaking I was favoured by the increasing darkness; and thereafter choosing always the by-roads and most unfrequented tracks, I succeeded at last in conducting you over the frontiers.

"Finally, after long and incredible wanderings, I came with you to this house, where the inhabitants received us both, as I declared that I was not willing to separate from you. Here I was convinced that you were perfectly secure, for by no means would the venerable fathers give up a sick person whom they had once received, to any criminal court.

"In this very chamber, then, I faithfully attended and nursed you; for as to your own five senses, you were indeed but very indifferently provided. Nor were the movements of your limbs to be commended. Neither Vestris nor Noverre would have given you much encouragement, for your head hung down on your breast, and when any one wished you to stand upright, then you tumbled about like a capotted nine-pin or skittle. As to your celebrated eloquence, too, you fared still worse, for you were d—d *monosyllabic*, and in your lucid intervals, only said, 'Hu—hu!' and 'Me—me!' out of which expressions your thoughts and wishes were not to be very clearly divined: Indeed, it was to be supposed, that your rational faculties had become unfaithful to you, and were gone a-vagabondizing on their own private account.

"At last you became all of a sudden extravagantly merry, cut inordinate capers in the air, and roared aloud with sheer exuberance of delight, tearing your habit at the same time, in order, we supposed, to escape even from the smallest restraint. Your appetite was then—"

"Stop, stop, Schönfeld," cried I, "give over this horrible and cruel raillery—you have already sufficiently informed me of the frightful situation into which I had fallen. Thanks and praise to the long-suffering and mercy of Heaven, and the intercession of the saints, that I am now rescued!"

"Alas! reverend sir," resumed Schönfeld, "in what respect are you the better of all that you have gained, I mean of this peculiar attribute of the soul, which is called self-consciousness? Methinks it might well be compared to the cursed activity of a pettifogging toll-keeper, or excise-officer, at best, or a controller of customs, who has established his damnable *comptoir* in the brain, and upon the last indication of goods coming forth from hence, cries out 'Hey day! The export is forbidden. These wares must remain in the

country.' The richest jewels, like contemptible grains of seed, remain stuck in the earth, and at last, all that rises above the surface are *runkelrüben*,[11] from an hundred thousand weight of which, perhaps a quarter of an ounce of bad sugar is afterwards extracted; and yet this pitiful export is, forsooth, to lay the foundation of trade with the glorious city of the New Jerusalem in the realms above, where all is magnificence and splendour. Oh, heavens! I would have given all my dearly bought powder *à la Marchalle*, or *à la Pompadour*, or *à la Reine de Golconde*,—would have cast it into the river, where it is deepest, if by transi-to-trade, I could have obtained from thence but a *quentlein* of the golden dust of the sun's rays, to dress the wigs of reverend professors, and men of learning, but in the first place, mine own! What do I say? If my excellent friend Damon, reverend sir, had, instead of the flea-coloured frock, contrived to hang about your shoulders one of those robes made of the morning light, in which the burgesses of the holy city walk to church, then, as to dignity and gentility, we should have come off very differently; but as the matter stood, the world held you for a common *glebæ adscriptus*, and the devil for your cousin-german!"

Schönfeld had risen up, and walked, or rather hopped, about the room, with vehement gesticulations, and twisting his features into incredible contortions. He was in the plenitude of his vein, kindling up one folly by another. I therefore seized him again by both arms. "Art thou resolved," said I, "to secure thyself a place in this hospital instead of me? Is it impossible for thee to talk more than five minutes together without falling into these absurdities?"

"Is then all that I utter," said he, "so very foolish, when thus the spirit comes upon me?"

"That is precisely what renders your talk so intolerable," said I. "There is often good sense at the bottom of all this gibberish, but so abominably metamorphosed, that a thought, good in itself, is like a fine dress hung over with party-coloured rags. Like a drunk man, thou canst not proceed in a straight direction, but art everlastingly floundering away hither and thither. Thy conduct is never consistent or consecutive."

"What is conduct?" said Schönfeld, with a contemptuous smile—"What is conduct, most venerable Capuchin? Doth not that term imply the preconception in the mind of some fixed and certain object, for the attainment of which we shape and adapt our procedure? Are you, reverend sir, sure of your own object? Are you not rather afraid that you may have occasionally admitted too little alloy in your spirituous potations, and now, like a giddy tower-watcher, see two goals, without knowing the right one? Besides, sir, let it be forgiven to one of my profession, if he is apt, perhaps too often, to have recourse to the humorous and the *outré*, in order to season the insipidity of this life, as we add Spanish pepper to cauliflower; without this, an artist of my vocation would be but a pitiful *dummkopf*,[12] who carries his privilege in his pocket, without ever daring to make use of it."

The monk had remained in the room, and had looked attentively at Belcampo and at me; but as we spoke German, he did not understand a single word. At last, he resolutely interrupted our dialogue. "Excuse me, gentlemen," said he,

"if I put an end to a discourse from which it is impossible for either of you to derive any advantage. Your health, brother, is yet much too weak to bear with a conversation which probably awakens painful recollections as to your past life. Besides, you will have time enough to learn all that your friend has to inform you of, as when you leave our establishment, he will no doubt accompany you. Belcampo has a strange manner of speaking; and by his eloquence and gesticulations together, never fails, when he tells a story, to bring every adventure vividly before the eyes of his listener. In Germany he must, I suppose, be looked on as mad. Here in Italy, he would be valued as a capital buffoon, and on the stage might make a fortune."

Schönfeld stared with all his might at the clergyman, then lifted himself on tiptoe, clasped his hands over his head, and called out in Italian, "Thou warning voice from the world of spirits—thou voice of omnipotent destiny! To me thou hast spoken at last through the organs of this reverend father. Belcampo—Belcampo! How could'st thou mistake so long thy true vocation? It is now resolved!" He then ran out of the room, and for that day I saw no more of him.

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Next morning he made his appearance, equipt for a journey. "Dear Brother Medardus," said he, "you are now quite recovered; you do not any longer require my assistance. I therefore take my departure, in order to go, as the spirit moves me, into the world. Farewell, then! Yet permit me that I exercise on you, for the last time, my art, although in my own estimation it has now become utterly contemptible."

Hereupon he drew out his razors, comb, and scissars, and with a thousand grimaces, *more suo*, brought my hair and visage into proper order. At last he took his leave, with many tears; and as the man, notwithstanding his fidelity, had become very strange and mysterious, and knew more of my history than I could have wished, I was not sorry to find myself free from his tiresome conversation.

*

The physician's remedies had been of great service to me; and as, by taking every day longer and longer walks, I had quite recovered my strength, I became convinced that I was able for the fatigues of a pedestrian journey, and resolved to leave a house, which, however suitable to the sick, was by no means a congenial abode for those who were in health.

The plan of going to Rome had been, without any volition of my own, brought so far into execution. I had always been advancing farther towards the place of my destination, and resolved, therefore, that I would now persevere in the same course.

Chapter XII

*

At last I had taken leave of the charitable brethren, and set out as a pilgrim on that high road, which I was told was the proper route to the great city. Notwithstanding that my health was now thoroughly reinstated, yet I was conscious of a strange apathy of mind, which threw a dark shade on every image, rendering the prospects before me grey, withered, and cloudy. Without even any clear remembrance of my past life, I was completely occupied by cares for the present moment. Towards evening, I always looked out anxiously for some place, (generally a convent or private house,) where I would be able to extort food and shelter for the night. I rejoiced not a little, when I met with persons sufficiently devout to fill my knap-sack and wine-bottle, in return for which I mechanically repeated, according to monastic form, the customary blessings. In short, I had sunk in spirit, as well as in outward observances, into an ordinary, stupid, and depraved mendicant friar.

At last, after many adventures, no one of which deserves particular commemoration, (for they were all of a similar character,) I came at last to a great Capuchin Convent, which, surrounded only by houses belonging to the establishment, and forming in itself a little town, is situated not far from Rome. This convent, though within itself large and populous, is, in other respects, lonely and insulated. The monks are by their rule obliged to receive others of the same order, and I imagined that I should live for some time with much comfort among them.

Accordingly I made up a story, such as I thought would sound favourably in their ears. I pretended that the convent to which I belonged in Germany had been recently broken up; that consequently I had been thrown on the wide world, and wished to be received into some other monastery, under the same laws.

With that hospitality and cheerfulness which are peculiar to the Italian clergy, they, in the first place, entertained me sumptuously, and the Prior formally said, that if no fulfilment of a sacred vow obliged me to travel farther, I was welcome to remain there as long as I chose.

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It was now the hour of vespers. The monks went to their appointed places in the choir, and I walked into the church. I was deeply impressed by the bold and magnificent architecture of the great aisle—but, alas! my spirit could now no more be exalted by those raptures which in early days attended me in the church of the Holy Lime-Tree, to which this bore a marked and mysterious resemblance!

When I had completed my devotions at the high altar, I indulged myself in walking through the different subsidiary aisles, contemplating the paintings at various shrines, which, as usual, represented the martyrdoms of the saints, to whom they were severally consecrated. At last I was attracted by a small and retired chapel, where the altar was exquisitely illuminated by the beams of the now setting sun, that streamed in through the painted window.

I wished to examine the picture, and devoutly making the sign of the cross, mounted up the marble steps. Oh, heaven! It was precisely the same, the fatal altar-piece of my own convent—the martyrdom of St Rosalia! Methought, however, the figure was yet more beautiful, more exquisitely attractive and seducing. It was Aurelia, in her fullest bloom of beauty, that I beheld; and my whole past life, which I had begun to forget, with all its wanderings and crimes—the murder of Euphemia, of Hermogen, and of Aurelia, revived on my recollection, as if concentrated instantaneously into one horrible thought, that penetrated my heart and brain, like a burning hot implement of torture.

I threw myself prostrate on the stone floor. I was convulsively shook and torn by my inward conflicts, as if I had been laid on the rack of the most cruel and relentless inquisition. Death would have been welcome—but, alas! death would not come to my relief! Hereupon I began to tear my garments, in the furious rage of despair. I howled in hopeless anguish, so that my voice resounded through the vaulted aisles of the church.

"I am cursed," cried I aloud—"I am cursed for ever. There is for me no grace, no consolation more—neither in this world nor in the next. To hell—to hell am I doomed! Sentence of eternal damnation has gone forth against me—an accursed and abandoned sinner!"

My cries of course alarmed the whole community. People came, lifted me up, and carried me from the altar of St Rosalia. The service was now over, and the monks assembled in the chapel. At their head was the Prior. He looked at me with an indescribable mildness and gravity of expression, which reminded me of Leonardus. He then advanced and took me by the hand, while to me it seemed as if some blessed saint, hovering in the air, held up the miserable sinner above the fiery and bottomless pool of destruction into which he was about to plunge.

"You are ill and feverish, brother," said the Prior; "the fatigues of your long pilgrimage have been too great a trial of your strength, but we shall carry you safely into the sick ward of the convent, where you will be faithfully attended by our physician, and restored to health."

I could not make any articulate answer to this address. I knelt before him in abject misery, and even kissed the hem of his garment. Deep-drawn sighs, which I could not repress, betrayed the frightful condition of my soul. The monks again lifted me up, and brought me into the refectorium, where they insisted on my accepting of some refreshments.

On a sign from the Prior, the brethren then retired, and I remained with him alone.

"Brother," he began, "your conscience seems to be loaded with some heavy sins; for nothing but repentance almost without hope, on account of some extraordinary crime, could have given rise to such conduct as you have this evening exhibited. Yet great and boundless are the mercy and long-suffering of God; very powerful, too, is the intercession of the saints. Therefore, take courage! You shall confess to me; and when this duty is fulfilled, the consolations of the church shall not be wanting."

These words in themselves were not remarkable; but the tone and manner of the Prior made on me such an impression, that at this moment methought the mysterious pilgrim of the Holy Lime-Tree stood beside me, and as if he were the only being on the wide earth to whom I was bound to disclose the horrors of my life, and from whom I must allow nothing to remain concealed. Still I was unable to speak. I could only prostrate myself again upon the earth before the old man.

"I am now obliged," said he, "to return to the chapel. Should you resolve to follow my counsel, you will find me there."

My determination was already fixed. As soon as I had, by a great effort, recovered some degree of composure, I hastened after the Prior, and found him waiting in the confessional. Acting according to the impulse of the moment, I began to speak, for the first time since a very long period, without the slightest attempt at disguise. On the contrary, I confessed all the adventures of my life, from first to last, without mitigating a single circumstance, which the severest censor could have suggested against me!

Horrible was the penance which the Prior now imposed upon me! Forbid to appear again in the church—shut out like an alien from the society of the monks, I was henceforth confined to the charnel vaults of the convent—miserably prolonging my life by a stinted portion of tasteless roots and water, scourging myself with knotted ropes, and mangling my flesh with various implements of martyrdom, which the ingenuity of demoniacal malevolence had *first* invented, lifting up my voice only in bitter accusations against myself, or in the most passionate and abject supplications for deliverance from that hell whose flames already seemed to burn within me!

But when my blood streamed from an hundred wounds—when pain, in a hundred scorpion stings, assailed me—and nature yielded at last, from inability to continue the conflict, so that I fell asleep like an exhausted child, even in despite of my torments—then the horrid imagery of dreams molested me with a new and involuntary martyrdom.

Methought I saw Euphemia, who came floating towards me in all the luxuriance of her beauty, and casting on me the most seductive glances. But I cried out aloud, "What would'st thou from me, thou accursed sinful woman? No! hell shall not triumph over the truly penitent!" Then methought her form, before so wanton and luxurious, shook and shivered. She threw aside her robes, and a horror, like that of annihilation, seized upon me; for I saw that her body was dried up into a skeleton, and through the ribs of the spectre I saw not worms, but numberless serpents that twined and twisted within and

without, thrusting out their heads and forked burning tongues towards me.

"Away!—begone!" cried I, in delirium; "thy serpents are stinging my already wounded flesh. They would fatten on my heart's-blood,—but then—I should die—I should die—Death would release me from thy vengeance!"

"My serpents," howled out the spectre, who now seemed like an infernal fury, —"my serpents may nourish themselves from thy heart's-blood, but herein consists not thy torment, oh wretched sinner! Thy pain is within thine own bosom, and in vain hopest thou for release in death. Thy torment is the thought of thine own crimes, and this thought is eternal!"

Hereafter the figure of Hermogen, streaming with blood, rose up out of the dusky void, and Euphemia fled before him. He, too, staid not; but rushed past, with an hideous groan, and pointing to a wound in his throat, which had the form of the cross.

I now wished to pray; but my senses were lost and overcome in the confusion that ensued. At first the whole air was animated, and filled with rustling and flapping of wings, and gibbering of unearthly voices. Then mortals, whom I had before known in the world, appeared metamorphosed into the most insane caricatures. Heads, with well-known features, came crawling about me on scarecrow legs, which grew out of their own ears. Strange winged monsters, too, which I knew not, and could not name, came floating through the air. Among these were ravens, and other birds, with human faces. But at last, these gave place to the Bishop's choir-master, at Königswald, with his sister. The latter wheeled herself about in a wild and furious *walz*, to which her brother supplied the music; but he kept all the while strumming on his own breast, which had become a violin.

Belcampo, whom I recognised, although he wore a hateful lizard's head, and sat upon a disgusting winged serpent, came driving up towards me. He wanted to comb my beard with a red-hot iron comb; but could not succeed in his attempt. The tumult always became wilder and wilder. More strange and indescribable were the figures, from the smallest beetle, dancing on large human feet, up to the long drawn-out horse skeleton, with blazing eyes, and with his own hide made into a pillion, upon which sat a rider, with a gleaming owl's head. A gigantic bottomless beaker served for his coat of mail, and an inverted funnel was his helmet.

"Hell," cried a voice, "is in a mood of mirth, and triumphs!" Hereupon I heard myself laugh aloud; but the exertion of laughter tore my breast; my pain became more scorching, and my wounds bled more fiercely.

At last the rabble rout vanished, and there came forward the glorious form of a woman more beauteous than the fairest of the boasted Circassians on earth! She walked up towards me.—"Oh, heaven, it is Aurelia!"—"I live," said she; "I live, and I am now for ever thine!"

Then the raging fires of sinful passion once more arose within me. I flew to Aurelia, seized and embraced her with fervour. All weakness and exhaustion were utterly forgotten; but instead of her light and sylph-like form, methought

I felt the weight and the torture of burning lead or iron laid on my breast. My visage and eyes, too, were scratched and wounded as if with rough bristles, like a wool-dresser's comb; and Satan roared aloud, with thrilling laughter —"Now, *now* art thou wholly mine!"

With a shriek of terror I awoke, and anon my blood flowed anew in streams, from the strokes of the knotted whip, with which, in hopeless agony, I chastised myself. For the crime of that interview with Aurelia, though but in a dream, demanded double penance, and I was resolved to run the risk even of committing indirect suicide, rather than omit one iota of the prescribed inflictions.

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At last, the period appointed by the Prior for my seclusion in the vaults was over, and, by his express command, I was obliged to remove from thence, in order to finish the remainder of my penance in the convent, although my cell was yet to be separated from all the other brethren; for, by such gradations, I was at last to arrive at his permission to return to the church, and to the society of the monks.

But with the latter gradations of penance I was not myself satisfied. I was enjoined only solitude and a daily use of the knotted rope; but I stedfastly refused every better sort of food which was now offered to me; and when at last allowed to enter the church, I lay for whole days on the cold marble floor, before the shrine of St Rosalia, and chastised myself in my cell in the most cruel and immoderate degree. By these outward sufferings, I thought that I should overcome the more fearful pains by which I was inwardly tormented, but in vain! Those phantoms, the off-spring of my own perturbed imagination, always returned, and I believed myself given up a helpless prey to Satan, who thus, for his own special divertisement, assailed me, and enticed me to commit those sins in *thought*, which in *deed* were no longer in my power.

The severe penance imposed upon me, and the unheard-of perseverance with which it was fulfilled, excited in the highest degree the attention of the monks. They contemplated me with a kind of reverential awe, and many times I heard whisperings among them—"He is indeed a saint!" This expression was to me unspeakably distressing, for it reminded me vividly of that moment in the Capuchin Convent of Königswald, when, in my outrageous delirium, I had called out to the spectral painter, "I am the blessed St Anthony!"

The very last and concluding stage of the penance imposed by the Prior, had now passed away, yet I had never desisted from self-martyrdom. Nature seemed unable to bear up any longer against the violence which I inflicted. My eyes were dim and sunk in their sockets. My bleeding frame was become a mere skeleton, so that, when for hours I had lain on the marble floor, I was not able to raise myself till the monks came to assist me.

At last, the Prior one day sent for me to his consulting-room. "Brother," said he, "do you now feel, after the severe penance you have undergone, your

mind soothed and lightened? Have the consolations of Heaven been poured upon you?"

In the hollow tone of despair, I answered him, "No!"

"Brother," he resumed, "when, after your confession of horrid crimes, I inflicted on you that severe penance, I satisfied the laws of the church, which demand that a malefactor whom the arm of justice has not reached, but who voluntarily confesses his evil actions, should also, by his outward conduct, prove the *reality* of his repentance. Yet I believe, (and the best authorities are on my side,) that the most excruciating torments which the penitent can inflict on himself, do not, as soon as he himself grounds any confidence on these exercises, diminish, by one fraction, the amount of his guilt. To no human intellect is it given to explain how the omniscient and eternal Ruler measures and weighs the deeds of mankind; but lost for ever must that mortal be, who deludes himself with expectations of taking Heaven by storm, through the force of penitential infliction.

"Moreover, the individual who believes that, by the fulfilment of such duties, the crimes of which he has been convicted are, of necessity, blotted out and atoned, proves, by this very belief, that his inward repentance has neither been true nor complete. But as for you, dear brother Medardus, you have yet experienced no consolation, and *this*, in my opinion, proves the truth of your conversion. Give up now, I command you, all chastisements—allow yourself better food, and no longer avoid the society of your brethren.

"Learn, besides, that your extraordinary life, with all its complicated involvements, is better known to me than it is even to yourself. A fatality from which you could not escape, gave to the devil a certain influence over you; and, while you committed crimes which to your own nature were abhorrent, you were only his tool, or implement.

"Dream not, however, that you are on this account less sinful in the eyes of Heaven, or of the church, for on you was bestowed ample power, if you had had the resolution to exert it, to conquer in a spirited battle the fiend who beset you. In what mortal heart has not this influence of our arch-enemy raged like a tempest, resisting every impulse of good? But without this conflict, virtue could have no existence—For in what doth virtue consist, but in the triumph (after a hard-fought battle) of good over evil?

"But, as one source of consolation, I can inform you, that you have accused yourself of a crime wherein you have been guilty in intention, but not in effect. Aurelia yet lives. In your madness you probably wounded yourself, and it was your own blood that streamed over your hands. Aurelia still lives; —this fact I have amply ascertained."

Hereupon I fell on my knees, with my hands uplifted in fervent prayer, and burst into tears.

"Know farther," said the Prior, "that the strange old painter, of whom, in your confession, you spoke so much, has, as long as I can remember, been an occasional visitor at our convent, and probably may, before long, again

appear among us. Long ago he gave me a parchment book to take charge of, in which are numerous drawings, but more especially a kind of chronicle, to which, as often as he came hither, he always added a few lines or pages. He has not left me under any injunctions not to shew this book to any one whom its contents may interest, and, of course, I shall not hesitate to intrust it with you. Indeed, this now becomes my indispensable duty, and hence you will learn the wonderful entanglements of your own destiny, which at one time led you as if into a higher world of visions and miracles, and, at another, into the most ordinary and most depraved scenes of what is called the world.

"It has been said that miracles have now wholly vanished from the earth; but this is a doctrine which I, for one, am by no means inclined to accede to. Miracles, if by that name we understand only that which we by no means can explain or account for, certainly have continued among us, though it is true, that by the observance of a few fixed and limited rules, our philosophers seem (in their own conceit at least) to give laws to nature; yet, nevertheless, there are phenomena every now and then recurring, which put all their boasted wisdom to shame, and which, in our obstinate stupidity, because they are not explainable, we therefore reject, as unworthy of belief.

"In this manner we deny, among other things, the possibility of a spiritual apparition, inasmuch as it is impossible for an incorporeal figure to be mirrored on the surface of the human eye, which is corporeal, the absurd fallacy and sophism of which reasoning is obvious. To tell the truth, I look upon this ancient painter as one of those extraordinary apparitions, which put to the blush all ordinary rules and theories. I am doubtful even if his corporeal figure is such as we can properly call real. This much is certain, that no one here ever discovered in him the ordinary functions of life. He would neither eat, drink, nor sleep; nor did I ever observe him either writing or drawing, though it was obvious, notwithstanding, that in the book, in which he only appeared to read, there were always more leaves written or painted on when he went away, than there had been before.

"I should observe, also, that all which the book contains, appeared to me to be mere *griffon-age*, or fantastic sketches of an insane artist, until you came to our convent. Then, for the first time, its pages came to be legible and intelligible, after you, dear brother Medardus, had confessed to me.

"I dare not give utterance more particularly to my own suppositions, or apprehensions, regarding the real character of this old painter, and his relationship to you. You will yourself guess at the truth, or, more probably, it will develope itself in the clearest light before you, when you have attentively perused this book. Go then, take every proper method and precaution to restore your bodily, as well as mental energies, and, in a few days, if you feel yourself recovered, as I hope will be the case, you shall receive from me the mysterious volume, which, meanwhile, I retain, as you have not strength at present for the task of deciphering it."

Henceforward, I was of course under the necessity of acting according to the injunctions of the Prior. I ate with the brethren at their public table, and omitted all chastisements, confining myself to fervent and prolonged prayer at the altars of the saints. Although my heart continued to bleed inwardly, and

my mind was still much disturbed, yet at last those horrible phantoms and diabolical temptations by which I had been persecuted, came to an end. Often, when tired to death, I passed sleepless nights on my hard couch, there was around me a waving as if of seraphs' wings; and I beheld the lovely form of the living Aurelia, who, with her eyes full of tears and celestial compassion, bent down over me. She stretched out her hand, as if protectingly, and diffusing blessings over my head. Then my eye-lids sank down, and a mild refreshing slumber poured new strength into my veins.

When the Prior observed that my mind and frame had once more regained some degree of healthy excitement, he again sent for me in private, and gave me the painter's parchment book, admonishing me to read it with attention in my own cell.

I opened the volume, and the first of its contents which struck my eye were drawings for those paintings which still exist in the Church of the Holy Lime-Tree, and which had, from earliest youth, possessed so mysterious an influence over my whole life. Formerly, the possession of this book would have agitated me almost to madness, from the degree of anxiety which it would have excited. Now, however, after the discipline which I had undergone, I was perfectly calm. Besides, there was scarcely any degree of mystery left which I had not by anticipation already developed. That which the painter had here, in a small scarcely-legible hand, set down, intermixed with sketches both in black lead and in colours, was but a distinct and clear delineation of my own dreams and apprehensions, brought out indeed with a degree of precision and accuracy of which I could not have been capable.

Chapter XIII

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After mature reflection, I have judged it superfluous to transcribe in this place the parchment book of the old and supernatural painter; though I might be tempted to do so by the consideration, that no one else could ever be enabled to understand and follow out its intricate details, or even to decipher the hand-writing. He sets out by speaking of himself in the third, but afterwards, or towards the close of his narrative, uses the first personal pronoun.

He was the eldest son of a certain Prince Camillo di Rosoli, (who had in early life been distinguished for his bravery and military talents,) and had been sent by his father, at an early age, into the world, where, to the great surprise of his noble friends and relations, he devoted himself almost exclusively to the study of painting, under a celebrated master of that art in Rome. Here he had already been for a considerable time, when his father, having been requested by the Republic of Genua to take the command of a powerful fleet against the Algerine corsairs, sent an abrupt and peremptory order for the young prince to return home. To this, Francesco, for that was his name, returned for answer, that a prince, surrounded by all the pomp and dignity incident to high rank, was, in his estimation, a mere cipher, in comparison with the character of an independent man of genius, whose wants were few, and who could supply these wants by the exercise of his art. A prince, he said, was, by the circumstances under which he lived, much more subdued and slavish than even the poorest artist:—for his own part, he knew well enough how to wield the pallet and pencils, but by no means the sceptre. Finally, that as to exploits in warfare, whether by sea or land, they were barbarous and abhorrent to his nature; whereas the creations of the painter were like reflections on canvass of the divine spirit, of which a share sometimes descends on favoured mortals.

Thus he sent back his father's messengers with contumely and disgrace, and the old prince, being thereby violently incensed, dispatched other ambassadors, who had no better success; whereupon, they informed him, that, if he did not obey his father's orders, they were commissioned to say, that he would be disinherited, and never more permitted to assume that rank which he had now virtually, though not formally, resigned.

To these conditions Francesco made no objections whatever;—on the contrary, he gave up to his younger brother, in a regular charter, all claims on the family estates; and as the old prince soon after lost his life in battle, Zenobio succeeded to the government, and Francesco continued to live poorly enough on a small pension, which his brother voluntarily bestowed upon him.

Francesco was originally of a proud and overbearing temper; but his instructor in the art of painting, the celebrated Leonardo di Rovino, was one of the most pious and ingenious of men. Finding that his pupil had actually renounced the fortune and rank to which he had been born, he gave him such good counsel and example, that for some years Francesco behaved as a very obedient and faithful disciple, assisting his master in the completion of several great works, which were almost wholly devoted to the illustration of the Christian miracles, and the glorious lives of the Saints.

After some time, however, it came to pass that Francesco raised himself to the rank of a master on his own account, and was engaged to paint many altar-pieces for churches, &c., in which Leonardo continued kindly to assist him, until at length, being very far advanced in years, he died.

Then like a fire long with difficulty suppressed, the native pride and insolence of Francesco's character again broke forth. He looked on himself as the greatest painter of his time, and joining with this notion of his own pre-eminence, the recollection of his hereditary rank, he assumed for himself the title of the Noble Painter. Of his once revered master, Leonardo, he now spoke with contempt, and invented for himself a new school of art, which was well adapted to attract the admiration of the multitude. He diligently studied the works of the ancient statuaries; among which, a certain renowned figure of Venus, above all others, engaged his attention; and henceforth no one could equal him in representing the luxurious seductions of the female form, which he always introduced naked, giving to his figures, by means of dark shadows in the back ground, and a brilliance of colouring, which were particularly his own, the most magical effect of *alto relievo*.

It happened that in the great city he fell into the society of a set of wild young men, most of them of high rank, who were delighted to have for their companion a man in birth equal to themselves, though, as an artist and man of genius, more interesting than men of mere fortune and family can generally pretend to be. Francesco was but too willing to attend their feasts and festivals, and was delighted by the praise with which they constantly fed his vanity, insisting, in particular, on the high advantages which he possessed over the artists of that age, by his preference of the ancient models, and his correctness as to drawing and anatomy.

Being all of them unable or unwilling to submit to any degree of restraint, and cherishing no other principle than that of yielding to the extravagance of youthful imagination, and the indulgence of their own passions, they formed a plan of renouncing altogether the Christian Religion, and adopting fantastically the creed and manners of the ancient Romans.

In this manner they for some time continued to lead a shameless and most dissolute life, in consequence of which, it happened that Francesco, neglecting the orders which were from time to time sent to him from convents and other religious institutions, fell into grievous distress for want of ready money. Added to this it so happened, that the salary usually allowed him by his brother Zenobio, was not paid at the regular time. He now recollected that the monks of a certain Capuchin convent had some months before offered a

large sum for an altar piece, representing the martyrdom of St Rosalia, which commission he had, under the influence of his dissolute pleasures, and apostacy from the Christian faith, refused to execute. Now, however, he resolved to perform the work required of him, wholly for the sake of the reward with which it would be attended.

Accordingly he began, intending to paint the martyrdom of St Rosalia, in his usual glaring and seductive manner, modelling her form and features after those of the favourite Venus which has already been mentioned. In the pencil drawing which he made in the first place, he succeeded well enough, and the wicked young men, his companions, were highly delighted with the notion of setting up a heathenish idol, instead of a real picture of a Christian saint, in the church.

But when Francesco came actually to paint, lo! by some inexplicable influence, the work turned out very differently from what he had intended.—A more powerful inspiration overcame that of wicked deceit, and hatred to the Christian faith, by which he had been till then actuated. It seemed as if the countenance of an angel, from the realms of the blest, began to dawn on his perceptions, out of the dark clouds which he had laid for the ground-work on his canvass. Involuntarily a kind of religious terror took possession of his mind. He became fearful of offending the blessed martyr whom he was employed to represent, and around the body, which, according to the original design, he had painted naked, were at last thrown the elegant folds of a dark-red dress, with a sky-blue shawl or mantle.

The Capuchin monks had, in their letter to the painter, only expressed their wish for a portrait of St Rosalia, that is to say, for a single figure, and for this purpose had his drawing been prepared; but now, led on by the workings of his own creative spirit, he invented a grand historical design, and introduced many figures, grouped with great skill, and which blended very harmoniously with that of the principal personage. In short, Francesco's attention was wholly absorbed by this work, so that the shameful course of life which he had before led was completely broken of, or at least interrupted.

It came to pass, however, that he found himself quite unable to finish, according to his own notions, the countenance of the saint; and this disappointment tormented him so exceedingly, that he had no rest by night or by day. He no longer thought of having recourse to his favourite statue of Venus, but it seemed to him as if he beheld his old master Leonardo, who looked at him mournfully, and addressed him in these words—"Alas! I would willingly assist you, but I dare not! You must first renounce all your sinful and shameless propensities, and, in deep repentance and contrition, pray for the interposition of the saints, against whom you have so fearfully offended."

The wicked young men, whose society had been long neglected by Francesco, once more sought him out, and found him in his painting room, but wholly unemployed; for, in consequence of his mental anxiety, he had fallen sick, and was lying powerless and despairing on his couch. On the appearance of his friends he complained to them bitterly of his misfortune, and expressed his belief that some malignant demon had interfered to rob him of his former reputation, and would prevent him altogether from completing

his picture of St Rosalia.

At this they all laughed aloud. "Ha, brother," cried one among them, "it is easy to perceive that solitude and fasting have been the demons that have brought this illness upon you. Come then, my friends, let us devote a libation of good old wine to Esculapius, and the benevolent Hygeia, in order that this feeble youth may again be restored!"

They sent immediately for Syracusan wine, which these fantastic young men drank out of antique-fashioned horns, and silver beakers, pouring forth, as they expressed it, their libations to Hygeia, before the unfinished picture. Afterwards, when they began to drink stoutly, and insisted on Francesco joining in their orgies, the latter resolved positively not to taste a drop of their wine, and would take no share in their merriment; although they drank the health of his favourite goddess, and tried every stratagem to flatter his vanity, and engage his attention.

At last, one of them exclaimed, "Our *penseroso* comrade there is perhaps really sick, and cannot so easily be cured as we had supposed. Yet, methinks, he hath acted very wrongfully in refusing to taste the remedies that have been already prescribed for him. Be this as it may, seeing that he is so very ill, I shall directly go hence, and obtain for him the assistance of a learned physician." The youth then threw his mantle around him, girted on his sword, and marched out. Scarcely, however, had he got beyond the door, when he returned again.—"Look you now, comrades," he exclaimed, "I am myself the man who will effectually cure this poor despairing artist!"

He then put on, as well as he could, the character of an old ridiculous physician,—bent himself half double,—walked with his knees knocking together, and twisted his face into an hundred wrinkles,—so that, in truth, he looked like an hideous old man; and his companions, greatly diverted, cried out, "See what learned physiognomies the doctor cuts!"

The doctor went up to Francesco, and pretended to feel his pulse. Then, in a pompous rough voice, "Why, thou poor devil!" cried he, "what has brought it into thine addled brain to fall sick in this manner? Thy pulse beats regularly; what then is the matter with thee? Be that as it may, I must make haste to cure thy distemper, whether real or imaginary, and thou must submissively follow all my prescriptions; for in the state in which thou now art, thy Donna Venus will never be pleased with thee. It might be, however, that, if thy visage were less pale, and thy looks not so downcast, the Lady Rosalia herself would receive you kindly. Here, then, thou poor desponding shepherd! sip up a little of that miraculous cordial which I always carry about with me. As you wish to paint portraits of saints and angels, my drink will probably be of especial service to you; for it is wine from the celebrated cellar of St Anthony."

With these words, the pretended doctor had pulled out a small and oddly-shaped flask from underneath his mantle, from which flask he now drew the cork. Instantly there spread itself all around, an extraordinary stupifying vapour, by which most of the youths were so confused and overcome, that, one by one, in the course of a few seconds, they all dropt in their chairs, closed their eyes, and fell asleep.

Francesco, meanwhile, as if tired of this mummery, and vexed to have been mocked and flouted at, snatched the bottle with violence from the doctor, intending at first to dash it against the wall. On the contrary, however, the odour attracted him so much, that he put it to his lips, and instantly swallowed a copious draught.

"Much good may it do you!" said the doctor, who now assumed his former countenance and youthful demeanour. But, at that moment, the door opened, and the youth, who had before departed in order to bring a physician, reappeared *in propria persona*. His double, who must have been the devil, stepped forward, and made him a formal bow, whereat the whole party were so affrighted, that they all (having been awoke from sleep by the noise of his entrance) started up, ran away, and tumbled headlong down stairs.

Even like the raging of a volcano was now the tempest which arose within the heart and soul of Francesco! All the Heathen stories which he had before painted, revived once more, in tenfold force, on his imagination, and their *dramatis personæ* floated around him in forms as seductive, and colours as brilliant, as if they had been alive, and corporeally present.—"But thou, my beloved goddess!" he exclaimed, addressing himself to the favourite Venus whom he had so often painted—"thou must assume also life, and a tangible form, and become mine, otherwise I shall devote myself from henceforth to Pluto, and the subterranean powers of darkness!"

Then he beheld, according to his distempered phantasy, the animated figure of his admired statue, with an exquisite bloom on her complexion, standing right before the unfinished picture, and kindly nodding towards him.

Hereupon, seized with a sudden fit of inspiration, he started from his couch, ran to his *easel*, and began to paint at the head of St Rosalia; for he thought that he would now be able to make an exact copy from the features of his Venus. It seemed to him, however, as if the firmest efforts of volition could not command his hand—as if, in spite of all his endeavours, the pencil glided away from the unfinished countenance of Rosalia, to the profane figures by which the rest of the canvass was tenanted—and the heavenly aspect of the saint, unfinished as it was, and that came there he knew not how, always broke out more visibly and powerfully into view, till at last the eyes seemed to move, and look into his very soul. Finally, he was overcome with such agitation, that he dropped his pallet and pencils, and fell to the ground as if dead, in a state of utter despair and insensibility.

When, after a long interval, he awoke from his trance, and had with difficulty raised himself up, he did not venture to look at the picture, which had now become so terrific, but crawled, with his eyes fixed on the ground, towards the table, where he still found the doctor's extraordinary bottle of wine, out of which he indulged himself with a long and powerful draught.

Francesco was, by this means, completely restored and energized. New life and spirit vibrated through every limb and fibre of his frame. He mustered up courage enough to look at his picture; and, behold! it was now completed, even to the finest touches of the pencil which in his best days he could have

been able to bestow! But what appeared most remarkable, was, that not the saintly countenance of Rosalia, but that of his old favourite Venus, now smiled with the most seductive expression and glances of love upon him.

Accordingly, Francesco, from that moment, became the victim of the most sinful and delirious passion. He thought of the Pagan statuary Pygmalion, whose history had supplied him with a subject for one of his former profane works, and like him, he implored the gods, that they would infuse life into the creations of his art. Very soon it appeared to him as if the principal figures in his picture began to move and to swell forward in *alto relievo*; but when he tried to clasp the phantom in his arms, he found that the dead, cold canvass still mocked at his embrace! Thereupon he tore his hair, and behaved like one possessed by the devil.

Chapter XIV

*

Already two days and two nights had Francesco passed in a state of raging delirium. On the third day, when he, as if petrified, and motionless like a statue, was standing before the picture, the door of his chamber opened, and there was a rustling behind him as if of female garments. He turned round, and beheld a very beautiful woman, whom he recognized at once as the original of his picture.

His astonishment was now beyond all description when he beheld that form, which he had so long contemplated as a marble statue, living, breathing, and blooming, before him. Nay, he was seized with a kind of mysterious terror, when he looked from his beautiful visitant back to the picture, of which the resemblance was so accurate, that it appeared like the reflection of her features in a mirror.

He felt the fullest conviction, that this event was the effect of supernatural agency; he could not utter a word, but, overcome by his fears, fell on his knees before the strange lady, whom he scarcely believed to be more than an aerial phantom.

This living Venus raised him up, however, and immediately proceeded to relate to him her own history.

She had seen Francesco at the time when he was yet a pupil in the school of Leonardo di Rovino. She was then but very young, but had conceived for him a passion so ardent, that it had never lost possession of her heart; and at last she had determined on leaving her parents and friends, who resided in the country, and wandering away to find him in Rome, as an inward voice had told her that he loved her very much; and that, merely from the force of that attachment, had been led to paint her portrait, which warning she now found to have been strictly true.

Francesco now believed all that she told him. He became persuaded that a secret mental sympathy existed between himself and this stranger, which had given rise to the passion by which he had so long been haunted. He forgot the statue, and gave himself no trouble with inquiries as to how the resemblance betwixt it and his new visitor had been produced. Indeed such questions would have been very needless, as they admitted not of any satisfactory answer.

The consequence of this visit was the solemnization (not by Christian, but by heathen rites) of a marriage betwixt the strange woman and Francesco, which was attended by all his libertine friends and associates. As it was found that his bride had brought with her a casket filled with jewels and ready money, he

immediately hired servants, and purchased a house, where they lived in great splendour and luxury for many months.

At the close of this period the paramour of Francesco gave birth to a son, which event was followed by her death, attended by circumstances so mysterious and horrible, that Francesco was obliged to fly from Rome, being accused of sorcery and witchcraft, also of divers other crimes peculiarly odious and abhorrent to the spirit and laws of the Christian religion. In consequence of all this, he was obliged to make his escape suddenly during the night, taking with him his child; and, as if endowed with supernatural energies, he made his way onwards to a wild and mountainous district of country, which he had before visited in his days of extravagance and pleasure, and where he knew that there was a cavern cut in the rock, in which he was now glad to take refuge with the child from a violent thunder storm.

As to the child, he could not have himself explained by what influence he was induced to bear it along with him; for, in truth, he only wished for its destruction. On being thrown on the hard floor of the cave, however, the infant, for the first time, uttered some fearful and melancholy cries, which penetrated to Francesco's heart; and hereupon, he, being moved with compassion, tried every method in his power for its preservation.

For this purpose, indeed, he was not well provided. At first he could only offer the child an orange to suck; but afterwards he recollected the doctor's extraordinary flask, of which the contents seemed inexhaustible, and which he had found on his departure, and brought with him. From this bottle he administered a few drops to the infant, who thereupon seemed miraculously strengthened and tranquillized; and he made for it, as well as he could, a bed of heather and soft moss, protecting it from damp and cold with his mantle.

Hereafter, Francesco passed several weeks in the cavern, living like a penitent hermit; and, incredible as it may seem, the child lived also, being supplied with food from the contributions that his father received from pious and compassionate neighbours. But Francesco's mind, meanwhile, became quite wandering and irrational. He prayed, indeed, with great zeal, to the blessed saints, that they would intercede for him, a miserable sinner; for his heart was now wholly alienated from his profane and blasphemous errors. Above all, he preferred many supplications to St Rosalia.

Thus it happened, that the wretched man, one beautiful and serene evening, was prostrate on his knees, in the wilderness. He watched the receding sun, which, at last, was slowly lost in the water, leaving the western sky like a sea of red dazzling waves; and that ruddy light faded ere long into the sombre grey tints of evening, the forerunner of dark night. Then Francesco perceived in the atmosphere the roseate gleam of an extraordinary light, which at first he noticed only as a strange phenomenon, because the sun had now departed. But the red light assumed a particular form, and floated always nearer and nearer to the penitent, till at last he recognized the figure of St Rosalia, kneeling on a bright cloud, and surrounded by angels. Then he heard a voice like that of soft and articulate music, which pronounced the words, "Forgive, oh Lord! this mortal, who, in his weakness, was not able to escape the deeply-laid snares, and resist the manifold temptations, of Satan!"

Hereupon lightnings quivered through that roseate cloud, and there was a deep and reverberating thunder-clap. A fearful voice answered the prayer of the saint,—"Oftentimes mortals have sinned and been forgiven; but what habitant of earth hath ever transgressed like this one? NO HAPPINESS IN LIFE, NOR PEACE IN THE GRAVE, SHALL BE GRANTED TO HIM, SO LONG AS THE SINFUL RACE TO WHICH HE HATH GIVEN RISE, SHALL EXIST UPON THE EARTH!"

Francesco now sunk down, as if annihilated in the dust; for he thoroughly knew that his irrevocable doom had been pronounced; and that, by the most horrible destiny, he would now be driven, like a second Ahasuerus, through the realms of life, without hope of enjoyment here, or confidence of salvation hereafter.

Of course, he now fled, without thinking of the child in the cave; for though he could not now wish for its existence, yet he dared not add to his already heavy crimes, by that of child-murder. He lived, being no longer able to paint, in extreme and abject misery. Many times it came into his mind, as if, for the glory of the Christian religion, he must yet execute extensive and magnificent works; and, consequently, he made out in his thoughts grand designs, both as to drawing and colouring, which should illustrate and represent the history of the blessed Virgin, and St Rosalia. But how could he begin those paintings, as he now did not possess a single *scudo* to supply himself with canvass and colours, and only supported himself by the small pittance of alms, which he received at the doors of churches?

Into the churches also, like other mendicants, he was allowed freely to enter; and thus it befell, that one bright and beautiful evening, though at a late hour, when the sun had gone down, he sat staring on an opposite empty wall, and filled it in imagination with the paintings which his genius was yet fully competent to execute. While he sat thus absorbed in reverie, he saw two female figures, who, silently and with noiseless steps, approached him. Their countenances were veiled, so that he had no perception of their features; but, with a voice that rose on his ears like celestial music, one of them addressed to him the following admonition:—

> "In the remote land of East Prussia is the celebrated Convent of the Holy Lime-Tree, wherein Providence has vouchsafed to shew many miracles; but the magnificent chapel there erected is yet without any ornaments of painting. Go thither, then! Let the practice of your art as a painter become to you an exercise of devotion, and your now desponding soul will be refreshed with heavenly consolation!"

With these words, the two female figures melted away in a gleam of light, and left the air filled with the fragrance of roses and lilies. Francesco was convinced of the supernatural character of these visitants, and resolved that he would on the following day begin his pilgrimage. On that same evening it happened, that a servant of Zenobio's, after much trouble, found him out, paid him two years' arrears of his allotted income, and invited him kindly to his brother's court.

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Thus far the old painter had written of himself in the third person, which, in his later memoranda, he exchanges for the first. I consider it needless to transcribe his historical account of the various fortunes and intricate relationships of that illegitimate race which he had founded, and of which I am a descendant. No reader would take the trouble of following out a detail which could scarcely be understood, unless thrown into the form of a genealogical tree. Besides, the mind revolts from the contemplation of enormous and complicated guilt! Suffice it to say, that the child which had been left in the cave was accidentally found and preserved; that a small ivory cup, which, along with the bottle of the devil's elixir, was discovered at the same time, bore, for an inscription, the painter's name, Francesco, by which the boy was afterwards baptized.

Many years passed away, and, according to the curse which had been pronounced against him, the painter's life was miraculously prolonged, in order that, by unheard-of penitence, he might expiate his own crimes. Meanwhile, he beheld the powers of darkness unceasingly employed against him. The boy who had been found in the cave, and who was protected and educated, first in the palace of Count Philippo di Saverno, in Italy, afterwards in the Court of Prince Zenobio, had several children, among whom were two, a son and daughter, who especially inherited their father's wicked propensities, and yielded to the temptations of the devil.

The family afterwards branched out so widely, that the painter's book alone would supply materials for many volumes. To this family belonged the Princess von Rosenthurm, the Abbess of the Cistertian Convent, both the first and second Baroness von F—, and the Count Victorin, who, notwithstanding the mystery under which he had been reared and educated in Italy, I now ascertained to be my brother. After the horrible crimes which my father had perpetrated at the court of Rosenthurm, he was arrested in his flight by an attack of severe illness, which detained him long at the house of a benevolent countryman, whose daughter (my mother) he afterwards married. For some time after this event, by his knowledge of literature and the arts, he contrived to obtain employment in the world, having assumed a fictitious name, and established himself under a principality where his person and features were wholly unknown. But sooner or later, sin is, even in this world, visited by punishment, and the just anger of the Almighty. My father was again attacked by sickness, so that the remnant of the once considerable legacy left him by his father, was wholly spent. He fell into the bitterest poverty, and was at the same time assailed by such horrors of conscience, that his life became a continued miserable penance.

At last Heaven, by means of an extraordinary vision, sent to him a gleam of consolation. He was warned that he should make a pilgrimage to the Convent of the Holy Lime-Tree in Prussia, and that the birth of a son should there announce to him the grace and forgiveness of Heaven.

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The last words in the manuscript are as follows. More, indeed, seems to have been written, but in a scrawl half obliterated, and so faint that it could not be deciphered.

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"In the forest by which the Convent of the Lime-Tree is surrounded, I appeared to the melancholy mother as she wept over her lately born, and fatherless infant, and revived her almost annihilated spirit with words of consolation. Miraculously sometimes has the favour of Heaven seemed to be won for children who are born within the limits of a blest sanctuary. They have even been visited by supernatural and celestial visions, kindling up in their infant minds the fires of divine love, and the holiest aspirations. The mother has, in holy baptism, given to this child his father's name, Francesco, or, according to conventual language, Franciscus.

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"Wilt thou then, oh Franciscus! prove to be that long-wished-for descendant, who, born on consecrated ground, will atone, by the piety of his earthly pilgrimage, for the crimes that were heaped up by his ancestors? And wilt thou procure for the wretched penitent refuge in the grave?

"I have taken such precautions, that the boy will remain for many years far from the world and its seductive delusions; nay, I have resolved that he shall become a monk. This destination, the same blessed saint who poured divine consolation into my soul announced to his mother, and this event may, indeed, be the forerunner of divine grace, and forgiveness, which, with the splendour of the morning light, has at last beamed forth upon me, so that I seem, in my inward mind, to observe clearly, by anticipation, every event of the future.

"Methinks I already behold this youth undergo the deadly strife with the fiends of darkness, who, with the most fearful weapons, press in upon him. He falls a victim to their infernal artifices, yet a beatified female elevates over his head the crown of victory. It is the blessed St Rosalia herself, by whom he is rescued. As often as the mercy of Heaven allows it to me, I shall be near him in infancy, in youth, and in manhood, and will protect him to the utmost of my limited power."

Chapter XV

*

The fame of my sanctity had now spread in such a manner abroad, that when I allowed myself to be seen in the streets of Rome, there were passengers who begged me for a moment to speak with them, and then, with the humblest prostration, implored my blessing. No doubt, my severe penitence must excite attention, for I had renewed in their utmost extent all my devotional exercises; but even my strange appearance, my neglect of my dress, &c. might be enough to excite the imagination of the lively Italians, who are ready at all times to fix on any remarkable individual for the hero of a religious legend. Often, when unconscious of all that passed around me, I had thrown myself on the steps of an altar, I was awoke from my inward contemplation by the murmur of prayer, and groans of repentance, from those who had collected around me, as if wishing to implore my saintly intercession with Heaven.

As in the Capuchin Convent, I frequently heard it called out in the streets behind me—"There goes the saint!" and such words never failed to strike like daggers to my heart. I wished, therefore, to leave Rome, and had made my arrangements for this purpose, when, to my utter astonishment, and indeed terror, the Prior of the Convent wherein I lodged, announced to me that the Pope had ordered me to appear before him.

Dark apprehensions arose within me, that perhaps the powers of hell were more than ever on the watch, and laboured by new stratagems to draw me into destruction. Meanwhile, I summoned up all my courage, and at an hour which was duly announced to me, repaired to the Vatican.

I was to have a private audience, and the Pope, who was still a handsome man, and looked as if he had been in the prime of life, received me sitting on a richly ornamented elbow-chair. Two very beautiful boys, in the dress of Sacristans, attended to serve him with iced water; and as the weather was very hot, they were constantly employed in cooling the atmosphere with large fans made of herons' feathers.

I went up to his Holiness with the utmost humility, and paid to him the customary homage of kneeling. He fixed his eyes sharply on me, but instead of the grave severity, which, from a distance, seemed to me before to characterize his features, his looks displayed much good humour, and he welcomed me with a very agreeable smile.

His first inquiries were only common-place questions, as to whence I came, what had brought me to Rome, &c. He then rose from his chair, and assuming a more serious tone, "Brother Medardus," said he, "I have summoned you hither, because I had received extraordinary accounts of your piety. But

wherefore do you perform your devotional exercises openly before the people, and in the most public churches? You probably wish to be looked on as a chosen saint, a pre-elect of Heaven, and to be worshipped by the fanatical mob. But inquire into thine own heart, whence this idea first arose, and by what means it has acquired such ascendancy. If your intentions are not pure before the eye of the Almighty, and before me, his appointed Viceroy, then, Brother Medardus, your now flourishing sanctity will soon come to a shameful end."

These last words the Pope uttered in a deep powerful voice, and his eyes gleamed as if in anger. For the first time, since a very long period, I felt myself accused, without being guilty of the faults with which I was charged. On this account I was not only able to retain perfect composure, but even to answer him with some degree of fervour and eloquence.

"Heaven," said I, "has indeed granted to your Holiness to look into my inmost heart, which is loaded and oppressed with a weight of unspeakable crimes, of which my deep consciousness may perhaps prove the sincerity of my repentance. Far from my thoughts is any attempt at hypocrisy. I never had any ambition to influence the minds of the people; on the contrary, the attention which they direct to me is abhorrent to my feelings, and causes to me the utmost pain and regret. In support of what I have now said, will your Holiness grant to a wretched penitent an opportunity of relating the events of his life, that he may prove the sincerity of his contrition, and his utter self-annihilation at the remembrance of the sins which he hath committed?"

On receiving permission, I accordingly went on to narrate, as concisely as I could, the whole circumstances and adventures of my life, only omitting names, which were of no consequence as to the facts that I related against myself. The Pope listened with the greatest attention, appearing always more and more interested. At last, by many extraordinary looks and gestures, he evinced the astonishment that I had excited.

"Your history, Brother Medardus," said he, "is, indeed, the most mysterious that I have ever heard. Do you then believe in the immediate, and *visible* agency of the devil?" I was about to answer, but he went on. "Do you believe that the wine which you stole from the relic-chamber, and drank, really impelled you to the crimes which you have committed?"

"Like a water distilled from pestilential herbs," said I, "it gave new strength to the seeds of vice and wickedness which lurked within me, till at length they burst from their concealment, and spread into luxuriant and multiplying growth!"

Upon this answer, the Pope seemed to sink into reflection, and said, more as if communing with himself, than addressing me,—

"What if the same rules of nature by which corporeal life is usually governed, applied also to the mind? If every seed or scion must bring forth and perpetuate that which is like to itself? There are whole families of murderers, and of robbers. In such cases this was the hereditary sin, entailed on a race followed by some inexpiable curse!"

"If he who is descended from a sinful ancestor," said I, "must of necessity sin again, it follows from this doctrine, that there is no sin!"

"Nay," said the Pope, "the Almighty created a gigantic power, who can yet tame and control the appetite for crime, which, like a furious wild beast, rages within us. This giant is named Conscience, and from his combat with the beast, arise our independence and volition. In the victory of the giant consists virtue; in the victory of the beast consists sin." The Pope was silent a few moments. He then added in a milder voice, "Do you believe, Brother Medardus, that it is becoming for the Viceroy of Heaven, to reason thus with you on virtue and vice?"

"Your Holiness," said I, "has condescended to allow the humblest of your servants to hear your opinions on this matter; and it well becomes the warrior to speak freely on that combat, whose dangers he has himself encountered, and in which he has long since obtained the palm of victory!"

"You have a favourable opinion of me, Brother," said the Pope; "or do you look upon the Tiara, as the laurel crown, announcing my victory to the world?"

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Hereupon the Pope again rose from his chair. "Thou art an excellent orator, Brother Medardus," said he, "and hast spoken after my own heart—we shall, as I perceive, understand one another better ere long than we now do. Remain at Rome. In a few days you will be promoted to the dignity of Prior of the Capuchin Convent, where a situation is now vacant, and afterwards, perhaps, you will be chosen for my Father Confessor. Go then, behave yourself with more prudence in the churches, and think not of raising yourself to canonization. The calendar is already crowded!—Farewell!"

Our interview ended here, and by these last words of the Pope, I was not a little astonished, as indeed I had been by his whole behaviour throughout, which was completely at variance with the picture which I had previously drawn of him. I had imagined not only that he was a worthily appointed Vicegerent of Heaven on this earth, but that he was gifted with every virtue, and all mental energies. He had, on the contrary, falsely supposed that I was actuated by the base ambition of being looked on as a saint, and now wished to excite in my mind a desire for other temporal distinctions, which was, in truth, not less sinful.

Notwithstanding my perplexity and dissatisfaction, I was led to conform to what the Pope had enjoined, as to the intermission of my penitential exercises; and I wandered for some days idly through the streets of Rome, meditating chiefly on my past life, on the penitence which I had undergone, and the career which was yet before me.

On the last of these idle days, as I passed through the Spanish Square, there was a mob assembled round the stage of a puppet-player. My attention was at once attracted by the croaking voice of Pulcinello, and the laughter of the audience. The first act was ended as I came up—the curtain dropped, and the audience stood in anxious expectation of the second.

The little curtain again drew up. The youthful King David appeared with his sling and his sackful of pebbles. With the most ludicrous gestures, he proved that the monstrous giant should now be slain, and Israel rescued. Then there was heard a fearful hollow roaring and rustling under the stage, whereupon the giant mounted up, with a huge and most absurdly ill-proportioned head. How was I astonished, when, at my first glance of this giant's head, I recognized the features of my old friend Belcampo. Right under his head he had, by means of an ingenious apparatus, contrived to fit on a small body, conformable to those of the other puppets, while his own person was concealed by the stage drapery, which last served, at the same time, for the mantle of the giant. Goliah, with most hideous grimaces of visage and contortions of his dwarfish body, held a proud and threatening discourse, which King David only now and then interrupted by a shrill and contemptuous laughter.

The mob were diverted out of all measure, and I myself being wonderfully attracted by this new apparition of Belcampo, allowed myself to be carried away by the impression of the moment, and broke out into the unrestrained and hearty laughter of boyish delight. Alas, how often before was my laughter only the convulsive vibration of that internal torment which preyed upon my heart!

Hereafter, the combat with the giant was preceded by a long disputation, wherein King David demonstrated, with great erudition and eloquence, wherefore he must and would smite his frightful antagonist to death. Belcampo made all the muscles of his countenance writhe and play with the most inconceivable vivacity, indicating extreme rage. His gigantic arms stretched themselves out against the less than little David, who, meanwhile, saved himself by incredible leaps and bendings, vanishing altogether, and then coming into sight again—now here, now there, even from the folds of the giant's own mantle. At last the pebble flew from David's sling against Goliah's head. He fell down lifeless, and the curtain dropped.

I laughed always more and more, excited not merely by the absurdity of Pulcinello, but by my previous recollection of Belcampo's grotesque genius. Probably I laughed too loud, for the people seemed to notice my conduct; and, when I turned round, there was a dignified Abbot standing near me.

"I rejoice, reverend sir," said he, "to find that you have not altogether lost your relish for terrestrial enjoyments. After I had witnessed your most extraordinary penitence and devotion, I believed that it would be wholly impossible for you to be diverted with follies such as these."

While the Abbot spoke thus, it seemed to me as if I ought to feel ashamed of my levity, but involuntarily I answered him in a way of which I directly

afterwards repented. "Believe me, Signor *Abbate*," said I, "the man who has once combated, like a stout swimmer, with the stormy waves of this changeful life, never loses altogether the power of lifting up his head bravely from the dark flood!"

The Abbot looked at me with significant glances. "Indeed!" said he, "I know not which to praise most, the poetry or logic of your illustration. I believe that I now understand you completely, and admire you, reverend sir, from the bottom of my heart!"

"I know not, for my part, Signor *Abbate*," replied I, "how a poor penitent monk can have excited your admiration."

"Excellent!" said the Abbot. "You do not, most reverend father, run any risk of forgetting the part you have to play!—You are worthy to be the favourite of the Pope!"

"His Holiness," answered I, "has indeed been pleased to honour me with an audience. I have done homage before him in the dust, as is becoming towards him, whom, on account of his tried virtues, Omnipotence has chosen for his vicegerent on earth."

"Well, then," replied the Abbot, "you, too, are no doubt a well-chosen vassal of the triple-crowned, and will nobly fulfil the duties required of you. But, believe me, the present Pope is a jewel of virtue, compared to Alexander the Sixth, and you may perhaps have erred sadly in your reckoning. Go on with your part, however—What is well begun is half ended!—Farewell, most reverend father!"

With a laugh of unrepressed scorn, the Abbot started away, leaving me confounded and almost petrified at his conduct. When I connected his expressions with my own remarks on the Pope, I became convinced that the latter was by no means that conqueror deservedly crowned "after his combat with the beast," such as I had supposed him to be; and, at the same time, I could no longer entertain any doubt that my penitential exercises must, to the majority of the public, have appeared but as a hypocritical and artificial system, adopted only to force myself into notice. Astonished and bitterly mortified, I returned home to my convent, and going into the church, had recourse to long and zealous prayer.

Then the scales seemed to fall from my hitherto blinded eyes, and I recognized at once the temptation of the powers of darkness, who had of new endeavoured to involve me in their snares. Only rapid and instant flight could save me from destruction. And I determined with the first rays of the next morning to set out on my way.

Chapter XVI

*

It was already night when I heard the gate-bell of the convent forcibly rung. Soon after, the brother who officiated as porter, came into my cell and told me there was a strangely-dressed man without, who insisted on speaking with me. I went accordingly to the parlour. It was Belcampo, who, in his usual mad style, capered up to me, seized me by both arms, and drew me, with an air of great mystery, aside into a corner.

"Medardus," said he, in a low and hurried tone, "you may make what arrangements you please for your own destruction; but Folly is once more come on the wings of the west wind to the rescue of your helpless wisdom. If there is but the slightest corner or thread of your habit remaining in sight, this arm will yet draw you back from out the yawning and bottomless abyss. Oh, Medardus! remember and acknowledge once more the power of love and of friendship. Think on David and Jonathan, dearest Capuchin!"

"I have admired you as Goliah, no doubt," answered I; "but what can have brought you hither at this time, I have yet to learn."

"What brought me hither!" said Belcampo, with great fervour. "What else could have impelled me, but an unreasonable, a boundless attachment to a Capuchin, whose head I once set to rights (in more senses of these words than one) when it was in very formidable disorder; who threw about him his blood-red golden ducats, with lavish profusion; who had intercourse with abominable *revenants*; who, finally, after he had committed a few trifling murders, was about to marry the most beautiful woman in the world, with whom—"

"Stop—stop there!" cried I—"no more of this, thou cruel-hearted and reckless fool. Heavily have I already done penance for all with which thou hast now, in thy wicked humour, reproached me!"

"Ha! Brother Medardus," said Belcampo, "are the scars then so tender and sensitive of those wounds with which the powers of darkness assailed you? This proves that your recovery is not yet perfect; so, then, I shall be as mild and quiet as a child—I shall tame the wildness of my fantasy—shall no more cut caprioles either mentally or corporeally—but only inform you, that as my attachment and friendship, chiefly on account of your sublime madness, which you call wisdom, are very great, I am determined to preserve your life as long as possible, and protect you from every danger that you bring upon yourself.

"Concealed in my puppet-show theatre, I have chanced to overhear a discourse relating to you. The Pope has determined to make you the Prior of

one of the most distinguished Capuchin Convents, and also to appoint you his own Father Confessor. Fly, then, quickly—fly from Rome, for dagger and poison are already prepared for you. I know one bravo who has even now got his retaining fee for sending you in all haste to the other world. In a word, you have come in the way of a certain famous Dominican, who has hitherto been the Pope's confessor. You are obnoxious to him and all his adherents; and, to conclude, to-morrow morning you must no longer be found within the walls of Rome!"

This new occurrence I was at no loss to connect in my mind with the expressions of the unknown *Abbate*. The two warnings were exactly in keeping with each other, and I stood so lost in thought, that I scarcely noticed the absurd conduct of Belcampo, who embraced me with great fervour, and then with hideous grimaces and contortions took his departure.

It might now be past midnight, when I heard the hollow rolling of a carriage over the pavement of the Court. Soon afterwards, I observed steps on the stone-stairs. There was a knocking at my door, which I opened, and beheld the Father Guardian of the Convent, who was followed by a man in disguise, masked, and carrying a torch in his hand.

"Brother Medardus," said the guardian, "we are informed that a dying man desires your spiritual assistance, and the last unction. Do then what the rule enjoins. Follow this man, who will lead you to the person who requires your attendance."

Hereupon, a cold shuddering ran through my limbs. The apprehension rose vividly within me, that they were leading me to my own death; yet I dared not refuse, but instantly rose, put on my habit, and followed the stranger, who lighted me down stairs, opened the door of the carriage, and forced me to enter it.

In the carriage there were two other men, also disguised, who placed me betwixt them. I inquired whither I was to be led, and who it was that wished for my prayers and last services? No answer. In deep silence, we drove on through several streets. For some time, I believed, by the sound of the wheels, that we were already beyond the city walls; but again, I perceived that we came through an arched gate-way, and then drove once more over paved streets.

At last, the carriage stopped, and I felt that they immediately bound up my hands; and that a thick night-cap was drawn over my face, by which I was completely blinded. At this I expressed some dissatisfaction and anxiety.

"No evil shall befall you," said a rough voice, "only you must be silent as to all that you see and hear, otherwise your death is inevitable."

They now lifted me out of the carriage. There was a rattling of keys and locks. Then a gate opened that groaned heavily, and creaked on its rusty and unoiled hinges. We entered, and they led me at first through long corridors, and at last down stairs deeper and deeper. The echoing sounds of our steps convinced me that we were in vaults, and the abominable and oppressive air

proved that these vaults were destined for the reception of the dead.

At last we stood still. My hands were untied, and the cap taken from my head. I found myself in a large apartment, dimly lighted by a lamp hung from the ceiling.

There was a man in black robes, and wearing a mask, probably the same who had come for me to the Capuchin Convent. He stood next to me; and along the walls of the room, seated on two benches, I beheld many Dominican monks.

The horrible dream already narrated, which occurred to me in the prison at the *residenz* of the Prince von Rosenthurm, came back vividly on my remembrance. I held it for certain, that I was now to meet an immediate and cruel death; yet I remained silent, and only prayed inwardly, not for rescue from the danger that awaited me, but for a religious and sanctified end.

After some moments of gloomy silence and expectation, one of the monks came to me, and said, with a hollow voice, "Medardus, we have here doomed to death a brother of your order. His sentence is this night to be carried into execution. From you he expects absolution and admonition in his last moments. Go, then, and fulfil what belongs to your office."

The mask in black robes, who stood near me, now took me by the arm, and led me from the audience-chamber through a narrow passage, into a small vaulted cell.

Here I found lying in a corner, on a straw-bed, a pale and emaciated spectre—properly speaking, a mere skeleton—half-clothed, or rather hung like a scarecrow, with rags. The mask placed the lamp which he had brought with him on a stone-table, in the middle of the vault, and retired.

I then approached nearer the wretched couch of the prisoner. My name had been announced, and with great difficulty he turned himself round towards me. I was confounded when I recognized the features of the venerable Cyrillus. A smile as of celestial beatitude came over his countenance, though I knew not wherefore he was thus rejoiced.

"So then," said he, "the abominable ministers of hell, who dwell in this building, have for once not deceived me. Through them I learned that you, dear Brother Medardus, were in Rome; and as I expressed a great wish to speak with you, they promised me to bring you here at the hour of my death. That hour is now arrived, and they have not forgotten their contract."

Hereupon, I kneeled down beside the venerable and pious old man. I conjured him, in the first place, to tell me, how it was possible that he could have been doomed by any society, calling themselves religious, either to imprisonment or death?

"No, no! dear Brother Medardus," said Cyrillus, "not till after I have confessed my manifold crimes, and, in the first place, those which I have through inadvertence committed against you; not till after you have,

according to the holy institutes of our church, reconciled me with Heaven, dare I speak any farther as to my own earthly misery, and worldly cares. You already know, that I myself, as well as all the rest of our community, looked upon you as the most hardened and most unpardonable of sinners. According to our belief, you had, by a continued chain of errors, heaped up the most enormous guilt on your head, so that we expelled you from our society. Yet your chief crime was but in yielding to the impulse of one fatal moment, in which the devil cast his noose round your neck, and dragged you away from the holy sanctuary, into the distractions of this sinful world.

"Then an abominable swindler, assuming your name, your dress, and, as if he were the devil incarnate, also your corporeal figure, committed those crimes, which had almost drawn upon you the shameful death of a murderer. It has indeed been proved against you, that you have on one occasion sinned, inasmuch as you wished to break your monastic vows; but that you are unstained by those enormities which were imputed to you, there can be no doubt. Return then to our convent, Medardus, where the brethren will receive him whom they believed for ever lost, with redoubled kindness and rejoicing."

Here the old man, overcome by weakness, sank back, fainting on his couch; and resisting the excitement which his words had produced upon me, I remembered that my present duty was to attend to Cyrillus only, and the welfare of his soul, which he had intrusted to my care. Therefore I laboured as well as I could, by friction, and raising him in the bed, to recover the unhappy prisoner from his insensibility.

At last he was restored, and went regularly through his confession; he, the pious and almost blameless old man, humbling himself before me, the depraved sinner! But when I absolved the self-accusing monk, whose only fault seemed to be that he had on many subjects *doubted*, and by these doubts had been driven hither and thither, it seemed to me as if, notwithstanding my own manifold offences, a divine spirit were kindled up within me—as if I were but the unworthy instrument, the corporeal organ, by which Omnipotence spoke temporally to souls not yet released from their temporal bondage.

"Oh, Brother Medardus," said Cyrillus, lifting his eyes full of devotion to Heaven, "how have your words refreshed and strengthened me! Gladly shall I now go to meet death, which the traitors residing here have prepared for me. I fall a victim to that abominable treachery and concealed wickedness, by which the throne of the Pope is now surrounded.—"

I heard hollow sounding steps, that always came nearer and nearer. Then keys rattled in the door-lock.

Cyrillus raised himself up with a violent and fearful effort.—"Return," said he, "return, Medardus, to the happiness and security of our own convent. Leonardus is already informed as to all that has occurred; he knows in what manner I am now about to die. Conjure him to be silent as to this last event; for how soon, even without this, would death have claimed a weak and tottering old man! Farewell, my brother! Pray for the salvation of my soul!

My spirit shall be with you, when, in our convent at Königswald, you read for me the prayers over the dead. Above all, I beseech you to be silent as to whatever you have witnessed here; for otherwise you will bring on yourself certain destruction, and involve our community in endless disputes."

On this point I made him a solemn promise. The disguised men had come into the room. They lifted up the old monk out of bed, and, as he had not strength enough to walk, dragged him through the corridor towards the vaulted hall, or audience-chamber, in which I had before been.

On a signal from the masks, I had followed the prisoner, and now found that the Dominicans had arranged themselves in a circle, within which they brought the old man, and then commanded him to kneel down upon a small heap of earth, which they had laid in the centre of the circle.

A crucifix was now placed by one of the masks in his hands, and he grasped it with great fervour. According to the duty of my office, I had also gone within the circle, and prayed aloud. Before I had ended, one of the Dominicans pulled me by the arm, and spoke to me aside. At that moment I observed a sword gleam in the hand of one of the masks; and in an instant, at a single blow, the head of Cyrillus was dissevered, and rolled down, streaming a torrent of blood, at my feet.

I could not endure the horror of this spectacle, but threw myself on the earth, in a state of half fainting and half consciousness. On my recovery, I found that I was in a small apartment fitted up like a cell. A Dominican came up to me.

"You are terrified perhaps," said he; "yet, brother, methinks you should rather rejoice to have beheld with your own eyes this perfect martyrdom. By that name, of course, it must be distinguished, if a brother of your convent undergoes the execution of his sentence; for, no doubt, you are, to a man, *all* saints!"

"We are not saints," replied I; "but we can at least say this much—Never was an innocent man within the walls of our convent murdered—Let me now go! I have fulfilled my duty faithfully, and with self-satisfaction. The spirit of my departed brother, who is now in Heaven, will, as I trust, be near to me, if I should fall into the hands of accursed murderers!"

"I do not doubt," said the Dominican, "that your departed brother, Cyrillus, will, in such case, be able to assist you. Methinks, however, you ought not to call the judgment which has been executed against him, a murder. Cyrillus had committed enormous misdemeanours against the now reigning Vicegerent of the Almighty; and it was by his (I mean by the Pope's) express command, that your brother was condemned to death. But as he must have confessed all to you, it is needless to speak with you any farther on this subject. Rather take, before you go, a little of this cordial for your bodily refreshment; for you look quite pale, and much agitated."

With these words, accompanied by a good-humoured smile, the Dominican handed to me a crystal cup, filled with a dark red-coloured and strongly

fragrant wine, which, like champagne, foamed and mantled.

I scarce knew how to interpret the obscure apprehensions which were within me. Surely this was the self-same wine which had once before been presented to me by the Baroness Euphemia von F—, which I then luckily refused to taste! I had no time for reflections, however; for the monk was attentively watching me. Involuntarily, and without thought, I put up my left hand over my face, as if blinded by the glare of the lamp; and with the other, lifting my glass, poured the wine into the wide sleeve of my habit.

The Dominican was effectually deceived.—"Much good may it do you!" said he; at the same time hastily opening the door, and making signs for my departure.

Chapter XVII

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I was again brought into the carriage, which, to my surprise, was now empty; and they drove me rapidly away. The terrors of the night—the violent excitement which I had undergone, and my grief for the unfortunate Cyrillus, combined to produce a deep gloomy reverie, in which I scarcely remembered where I was, or knew what was passing around me. When the carriage stopped, I took no notice; but from this trance I was awoke by two men, who lifted me (as if I had been unable to help myself) out of the carriage, and then threw me down, roughly enough, upon the ground.

The morning had already broke, and I found myself before the gate of my own convent, of which I immediately rang the bell. The porter was terrified at my pale and disordered aspect; and, of course, had announced his apprehensions to the Prior, for, immediately after early mass, the latter came with anxious looks into my cell.

To his questions I only answered generally, that the death of the person whom I had been sent for to absolve had been very horrible, and that, consequently, I could not help being much agitated. The Prior was satisfied with this answer, but soon afterwards, from the insupportable torment which I felt in my left arm, I could not contain myself, but screamed out aloud.

The surgeon of the convent was sent for, and, meanwhile, the sleeve of my habit ripped open; but the cloth had already grown into my flesh, and the whole arm was found withered, and eaten away to the very bone, by a deleterious caustic.

"I was to have drunk wine," said I to the Prior, "but allowed the contents of the glass to run thus into my sleeve." I said no more, remembering the injunctions of Cyrillus to secrecy.

On the arrival of the physician, he declared that the wine had been impregnated with the most destructive and corrosive of all poisons; but by the remedies which he applied, my torment was lessened, at least, though by no means assuaged. My recovery was slow and tedious; for it was considered doubtful whether the limb ought not to be amputated. I escaped that misfortune, however; but my arm remains to this hour withered and powerless.

"I am now perfectly aware," said the Prior, one morning after I became convalescent, "of the peculiar circumstances by which you have lost the use of your arm. The pious Brother Cyrillus vanished in the most mysterious manner from our convent and from Rome; and you, dear Brother Medardus, will in the same manner be lost, if you do not immediately change your

residence. During your illness, many suspicious inquiries were made after you, and had it not been for my watchfulness, and the faithful attachment of your brethren, probably you would not now have been in life.

"To me you appeared from the first an extraordinary man, under the influence of a destiny, whose final decrees are yet inscrutable; but however this may be, you have certainly, since your arrival in Rome, attracted far too much attention, to escape the animosity and watchfulness of certain people, who, no doubt, wish you to be removed out of their way. My advice is, therefore, that you should return home to your own country, and to your own convent. May all happiness, and, above all, the grace of God, be with you!"

Even without this admonition of the Prior, I should have clearly felt, that so long as I remained in Rome, my life must be in constant danger. To this painful thought, others were added. I was haunted still by the recollection of my numberless and enormous crimes; then, above all, there was the immediate torment of my festering and withered arm. I could not value a life which was so useless and miserable, but, on the contrary, reverted frequently to the thoughts of suicide, which only the terror of committing a new crime prevented me from carrying into execution. But even without this, I might soon fall in the way of obtaining for myself a timely and welcome martyrdom, and whether this should occur at Rome or elsewhere was to me indifferent.

More and more, however, I accustomed myself to dwell on the thoughts of a speedy and violent death, to which, by my penitence, I considered myself entitled. Methought I saw the figure of the monk Medardus, *of myself*, issuing from the gates of the convent, and passing along the road. Then there appeared behind him a dark and indefinable form, who stabbed him with a stiletto to the heart. A crowd immediately collected round the bloody corpse. "Medardus!" cried they; "the pious and blessed penitent Medardus is murdered!"

These words were spread and repeated hundred-fold through the streets; and the crowd always became more numerous, lamenting the loss of a saint so gifted and distinguished. Women kneeled down, and reverentially dipt their handkerchiefs in the blood which flowed from my wounds. In doing this, one of them remarked the scar of the cross on my neck, whereupon she exclaimed aloud—"He is indeed a martyr—a glorified saint! See here the impress of Heaven, which he has borne on his earthly frame!" Hereupon all the multitude threw themselves on their knees, and happy were those who could touch the mortal remains of the saint, or even the hem of his garment! Then a new impulse was given. There was an opening made in the crowd. A bier was brought forward, ornamented with a profusion of flowers, and in triumphant march, with prayer, and the choral voice of divine music, the attendant youths carry on it the dead body of the saint onwards to the church of St Peter!

Thus my still wandering and deluded fantasy elaborated, in the most vivid colours, a picture, representing my own martyrdom. Without once apprehending how the deceitful demon of pride led me on, and by new methods laboured to ensure my destruction, I resolved, after my perfect recovery, to remain in Rome; to continue the same penitential life which I had

hitherto adopted, and then either to die in the full odour and splendour of sanctity, or else, being rescued by the Pope, to raise myself up to high dignities and power in the church.

My convalescence, as I have already mentioned, was very tedious, but the powerful energies of my constitution enabled me at first to bear up against the torture, and at last triumph over that abominable poison, which had not only destroyed one limb, but threatened, by sympathy, to injure my whole vitals. The physician, however, had no doubts of my perfect restoration. Indeed, it was only at those moments of mental confusion which usually precede sleep, that I was liable still to feverish attacks and delirium.

In one of these paroxysms I was visited by an extraordinary dream, of which the circumstances were far too wild and confused to be faithfully described. Methought I again looked on my own dead body, but not as before in a public street of Rome. It was now laid in a lonely *berceau* walk of the convent at Königswald, where every object in the landscape came in vivid colours to my remembrance. Methought I was conscious of my own separate existence, as a self-subsisting idea, and then I ascended, as if borne up by my own buoyancy, from the realms of earth, and ere long found myself floating in a cloud of a beautiful roseate colour. There I beheld a magnificent array of wood-crowned mountains and rocky cliffs, gleaming in the morning sun, but far more beautiful than those of the earth. Anon, methought I stood at the lofty gate of a gorgeous palace, and wished to enter; but fearful bolts of lightning crossed and re-crossed each other, like fiery lances, betwixt me and the entrance, till I was struck down into the bosom of a damp, obscure, and colourless cloud. As I fell down deeper and deeper, I again beheld the dead body, which raised itself up and stared upon me with ghastly, lustreless eyes, and howled out some accents of lamentation, like the north wind in a narrow ravine. Anon, methought the face of all nature became dead and withered. The flowers declined their heads, sank down, and faded away. The trees lost every leaf, and their dry branches rattled like the marrowless joints of a skeleton. I saw men and women too, no longer like living beings, but like pale, hideous spectres, and they threw themselves in despair on the earth, calling out, "Mercy! mercy! Is then the guilt of our crimes so enormous, that thou, oh Lord, givest unto our Arch-Enemy power to destroy, and render vain the sin-offering of our blood?"

I wished for annihilation, though, being a disembodied idea, this was impossible. Then methought I was, as if by an electrical shock, roused up from my sleep. The great clock of the convent struck twelve. "The dead raise themselves up," said a voice; "they rise out of their graves, and are gone to divine worship." Accordingly, I began to pray. Then I heard a slight knocking at my door, and believed it was one of my brethren, who wished to come into the room, till, with unspeakable horror, I recognized the voice of my ghostly DOUBLE.—"Broth-er—Broth-er!" said the voice—"I am here—I am here! —Come with me—Come with me!"

I wished thereupon to start up from my couch, but a shuddering coldness had fettered every limb, and every attempted movement produced only a convulsive inward struggle. My only refuge was in prayer; and I heard, in a strange manner, the audible effect of my own voice. Now it gradually

triumphed over the renewed knocking and stammering of the spectre; but at last all was confused and lost in the hum of ten thousand voices, as when the air is filled with myriads of insects. Anon this humming changed to articulate lamentations as before, and methought I was again wrapt in the dark cloud; but suddenly there came over it a gleam of the most exquisite morning red. Through the dark vapours descended a tall and dignified form, on whose bosom a cross shone with dazzling effulgence. The features were those of St Rosalia!

The lamentations were now turned to an exulting hymn of praise; and from afar I beheld the landscape again blooming in all the luxuriance of spring. Only my own voice was now heard, lamenting—"Shall I then alone, of all these rejoicing inhabitants of earth, be given a prey to everlasting torments?"—Then a change came over that beautiful phantom. Its awe-striking dignity was transformed into mild grace and beneficence, and a sweet smile was diffused over her features.

"AURELIA!" cried I aloud, and with that name I at last in reality awoke, and saw the clear morning light beaming into my cell.

By this introduction of Aurelia I clearly recognized the new endeavours of the restless powers of darkness against me; and no sooner was this perception aroused, than I understood also the nature of those delusions by which I had been induced to remain in Rome. I hastened down to the church, and prayed with great fervour, leaving out, however, all bodily chastisements, having need of all the strength that I could muster for my long and fatiguing journey. Before the mid-day sun shot down his perpendicular and insupportable beams, I was already far from Rome, taking precisely the same road by which I had come thither.

Chapter XVIII

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I determined to avoid the *residenz* of the Prince; not because I was afraid to be recognized and punished, but because I could not bear to look on the scene of my horrible offences. Moreover, should Aurelia still reside there, I felt that I had no certainty of avoiding new temptations; and this apprehension, perhaps, proved, more than any other circumstance, the reality of my penitence and conversion. The conviction afforded me some consolation, that at least the diabolical spirit of pride was annihilated within me, and that I no longer wished to throw myself into danger, from a vain confidence in my own strength.

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My long pilgrimage was without any incidents deserving of record. At last I had arrived amid the well-known Thuringian mountains; and one morning, through the dense vapours that lingered in a valley before me, I beheld a castle, which I instantly recognized to be that of the late Baron von F—. As I came nearer, alas! how was the scene now changed from what it had been! The walks and ornaments of the parks were become a wilderness of ruin and devastation. The shrubberies, parterres, and young plantations, were either torn up by the cattle, or converted into ploughed fields. The road on which I walked, after entering the path, was overgrown with moss and weeds; and even the beautiful lawn before the mansion-house, that used to be so carefully kept, was now covered with a herd of cattle, and another of swine, that had rooted up all its verdure. The windows of the castle, too, were broken, and looked ghastly. The steps leading up to the principal entry were ruinous, and covered with lichens and grass that waved in the wind. Through the whole domain there seemed not to be one living being. All was neglected and lonely.

On passing through a dense thicket, which had once been my favourite walk, I heard an obscure sound of moaning and lamentation. Then I perceived a grey-headed old man at some distance, who, though his countenance was turned towards me, did not seem in the least to notice my presence or approach. On the contrary, when I came almost close to him, he uttered, as if talking to himself in deep reverie, the words,—"Dead—dead and gone,—all dead and gone, whom I once loved in this world. Oh, Aurelia! thou, too, the last, art dead to all sublunary enjoyments!"

I now recognized Reinhold, the old intendant, though grief had so much changed his appearance, that at first I knew not who he was. I had do wish to speak with any one, but now remained as if involuntarily rooted to the spot.

"Aurelia dead!" cried I. "No, no, old man, thou art misinformed. The power of the all-seeing and omniscient Judge protected her from the stiletto of the

murderer!"

The old man started at these words as if he had been struck by lightning. "Who is here?" cried he, vehemently—"Who is here?—Leopold! Leopold!" A boy now sprung out from the thicket, and on perceiving me, pronounced the customary salutation—"*Laudetur Jesus Christus!*"—"*In omnia sæcula sæculorum*" answered I. Then the old man raised himself up. "Leopold! Leopold!" said he, with great energy; "Who is among us? What is this man?"

Now, for the first time, I perceived that Reinhold was blind. The boy answered him. "A reverend monk, Herr Intendant; a monk of the Capuchin order." Upon these words, it seemed as if the old man was seized by the utmost terror and abhorrence.

"Away—away!" cried he. "Boy, lead me from hence—To my room—to my room! Peter shall close all the doors, and keep watch.—Away—away!" With these words, he seemed to exert his utmost strength to escape from me, as from a furious wild beast. The boy looked at him and me alternately, as if quite confounded, and at a loss how to act; but the old man, instead of allowing himself to be led, forced on his attendant, and they soon disappeared through a gate, which, as I perceived, was immediately locked behind them.

I was much shocked at this adventure, and fled as quickly as I could from this place, the scene of my greatest crimes, which now appeared to me more abominable than ever. I soon afterwards found myself in dense thickets of the forest, and but for the direction which the sun afforded, would not have known what path to choose, or whither to turn. I sank into a deep reverie, in which I almost lost all self-consciousness of what was immediately around me; till at last, being much fatigued, I laid myself down on a mossy couch, formed on the spreading roots of a wild oak tree, not far from which I saw a small artificially formed eminence, on which was planted a cross. Gazing on this, I soon fell into a profound sleep, and the bodily exertions that I had undergone were such, that I now slumbered without ever being visited by any of my former visions.

On awaking from my sleep, I was surprised to perceive an old countryman seated near me, who, as soon as he saw that I raised myself up, respectfully took off his cap.

"No doubt, reverend father," said he, "you have travelled a far way, and are greatly fatigued, otherwise you would not have chosen *this* as your resting-place. Or it may be that you are an entire stranger, and know not the peculiar circumstances connected with this spot?"

I assured him, that being a stranger, a pilgrim from the most distant parts of Italy, I could not possibly have any knowledge of the circumstances to which he alluded.

"Well," said the countryman, "the warning which I wished to give you is particularly applicable to all brethren of your order; for it is said that some years ago a Capuchin monk was murdered in this very part of the forest; consequently, when I saw you sleeping on the grass, I determined to station

myself here, and be ready to defend you from whatever danger you might be threatened with. Whether the story of your brother's death at this place be true or false, this much is certain, that at the time alluded to, a Capuchin came as a passing guest to our village, and after staying all night, walked away in the morning, through these mountains. On that very day, a neighbour of mine going as usual to big work through the deep valley below what is called the 'Devil's Ground,' suddenly heard a piercing hideous cry, which continued for a few seconds, and then strangely died away in the air. He insists, (though to me this appears very improbable,) that at the same time when he heard the cry, he saw the form of a man shoot down from the jutting-out point of rock above, into the bottomless abyss.

"This evidence was so circumstantial, that all the village began to think it possible that the Capuchin who had left us that morning might really have fallen down from the cliff, and we tried every method in our power, without endangering our own lives, to find out his dead body in the chasm.

"Our labour proved fruitless, however; we laughed at the man who had put us to much trouble, and ridiculed him still more when he afterwards insisted, that in returning home at night, he had plainly seen the figure of a man rising out of the water.

"This last must have indeed been mere imagination; but afterwards we understood that the Capuchin, God knows wherefore, had been murdered by a man of rank, who had afterwards thrown down the body from that point of rock which we call the Devil's Chair.

"That the murder must have been committed near the spot where we now are, I am fully persuaded; for, as I was once sitting quietly after hard work, and looking at an old hollow oak-tree, methought I saw something like a corner of dark-brown cloth hanging out, which excited my curiosity. Accordingly, when I went to the tree, I drew out of it, to my great surprise, a Capuchin tunic, quite fresh and new, which I therefore took home to my cottage. I perceived that one of the sleeves was stained with blood, and in one corner found embroidered, the name 'Medardus.'

"It occurred to me that it would be a pious and praise-worthy action if I sold the habit, and give the money that it would bring to our priest, requesting him to read prayers for the benefit of the poor murdered man. Consequently, I took the dress with me to town, but no old-clothesman would purchase it, and there was no Capuchin Convent in the place.

"At last there came up to me a man, who, by his dress, must have been a *chasseur*, or forester. He said that he was just then in want of such a garment, and gave at once the money that I had demanded for it. Returning home, I made our priest say several masses, and as I could not contrive to station a cross in the Devil's Abyss, I placed one here, as a memorial of the Capuchin's cruel fate.

"However, the deceased father must have had not a few sins to answer for; his ghost is said to wander about here still, and has been seen by divers people, so that the priest's labours have been of no great service in his behalf.

Therefore, reverend father, I would earnestly entreat of you, when you have returned safe to your own convent, to read prayers now and then for the soul of your unfortunate brother, Medardus. Will you promise me this?"

"You are in a mistake, my good friend," said I; "the Capuchin Medardus, who some years ago passed through your village, is not murdered; there is no need of masses for him, since he still lives, and must by his own labours and repentance work out the salvation of his soul. I am myself this very Medardus.—Look here!"

With these words I threw open my tunic, and shewed him my name embroidered, as he had described, on the outside of the lapelle. Scarcely had the *bauer* looked at the name, when he grew deadly pale, and stared at me with every sign of the utmost horror. Then suddenly he started up, and without uttering a word, ran as if he had been pursued by fiends into the wood.

It was obvious that he took me for the ghost of this murdered Medardus, and all endeavours would have failed to convince him of his error. The remoteness of the place, and the deep stillness, broken only by the roaring of the not far distant river, were well suited to awake in my mind the most horrible imagery. I thought once more of my detestable *double*, and infected almost with the terror of the countryman, I felt myself agitated to my inmost heart, and believed that the frightful spectre of my second self would start out from some dark thicket against me.

Summoning my utmost courage, I again stepped forward on my journey, but so much was I disturbed by the revived notion of my ghostly *double*, that not till after a considerable time had I leisure to recollect that the countryman's narrative had completely cleared up to me the mystery how the delirious monk had first got possession of the tunic, which, on our flight into Italy, he had left with me, and which I had recognized as unquestionably my own. The forester whom he had applied to for a new dress, had, of course, purchased it from the countryman in the market-town.

I was deeply impressed by the confused and broken manner in which the *bauer* had told the fatal events of the Devil's Ground, for I thus perceived the intricate web—the concatenation of circumstances, in which the powers of darkness seemed to have done their utmost to produce that fearful exchange of characters betwixt myself and Victorin. The strange sight that had been seen by the *bauer*, too, of a man rising out of the abyss, which his companions believed only a vision, appeared to me of no little importance. I looked forward with confidence to an explanation of this also, though without knowing where it could be obtained.

Chapter XIX

*

After a few days more of restless walking, it was with a beating heart, and eyes swimming in tears, that I once more beheld the well-known towers of the Cistertian Monastery, and village of Heidebach. Anxious as I now am to wind up this long and painful narrative, I shall not pause to describe and analyze my feelings at thus visiting once more the scenes of my youth, which, in the yellow light of a still autumnal day, lay in all their wonted calmness and beauty before me.

I passed through the village, went up the hill, and came to the great square shaded by tall trees before the gate of the convent. Here, for some time, I paused, seating myself on a stone bench in a recess, reviving all my oldest and most cherished recollections, that came over my mind like shadows of a dream. Scarcely could I now believe that I was the same Francesco who had there spent so many years with a heart unclouded by care, and to whom guilt and remorse were yet known only by name.

While thus occupied, I heard at some distance a swelling voice of melody—it was an anthem sung by male voices. A large crucifix became visible, and I found that a procession was coming up the hill. The monks walked in pairs, and at the first glance I recognized that they were my own brethren, and that the old Leonardus, supported by a young man whose name I did not know, was at their head. Without noticing me, they continued their anthem, and passed on through the convent gate.

They were followed by the Dominicans and Franciscans, also from the town of Königswald, and walking in the same order of procession. Then several coaches drove up, in which were the nuns of St Clare. From all this I perceived that some remarkable festival was now to be solemnized.

The church doors were opened, and I went in. People were adorning the altars, and especially the high altar, with flower garlands, and a sacristan gave directions for a great quantity of fresh roses, as the Abbess had particularly desired that they should predominate. Having resolved that I would immediately request permission to join my brethren, I first strengthened myself by fervent prayer, after which I went into the convent, and inquired for the Prior Leonardus.

The porteress then led me into a hall, where the Prior was seated in an arm-chair, surrounded by his brethren. Agitated to the utmost degree, and indeed quite overpowered, I could not refrain from bursting into tears, and falling at his feet. "Medardus!" he exclaimed, and a murmur sounded immediately through the ranks of all the brethren. "Brother Medardus!" said they —"Brother Medardus, the long-lost, is returned!"

I was immediately lifted up from the prostration into which I had involuntarily sunk, and all the brethren, even those with whom I was before unacquainted, fervently embraced me.—"Thanks and everlasting praise," they exclaimed, "to the mercy and long-suffering of Heaven, that you have thus been rescued from the snares and temptations of that deceitful world. But relate, dearest brother—tell us your adventures—all that you have encountered!"

Thus there arose among them a murmur of confused and anxious inquiries; but, meanwhile, the Prior rose up and made a sign for me to follow him privately into another room, which was regularly appropriated for his use when he visited the convent.

"Medardus," he began, "you have in the most wicked manner broken your monastic vows, and deceived that faith which was reposed in you by all our community. Instead of fulfilling the commissions with which I intrusted you, you became a disgraceful fugitive, no one knows why, nor whither. On this account, I could order you to be imprisoned for life, or to be immured, and left to perish without food or drink, if I chose to act according to the severe laws of our order."

"Judge me, then, venerable father," interrupted I—"judge me according as the conventual law directs. I should resign with pleasure the burden of a miserable life; for indeed I feel but too deeply that the severest penance to which I could subject myself, would to me bring no consolation."

"Recover yourself," said Leonardus; "be composed and tranquil. I have now fulfilled my duty in speaking to you as an abbot; but, as a friend and father, I have yet to address you, and to hear what you have to say in your own justification. In a wonderful manner you have been rescued at Rome, from the death with which you was threatened. To the disorders which prevail there, Cyrillus has been the only sacrifice."

"Is it possible, then," said I, "that you already know—"

"I know it all," answered the Prior; "I am aware, that you rendered spiritual assistance to the poor man in his last moments; and I have been informed of the stratagem of the Dominicans, who thought they had administered deadly poison in the wine which they offered you as a cordial drink. Had you swallowed but a single drop, it must have caused your death in a few minutes; of course you found some opportune method of evading this."

"Only look here," said I, and, rolling up the sleeve of my tunic, shewed the Prior my withered arm, which was like that of a skeleton; describing to him, at the same time, how I had suspected the fate that was intended me, and found means to pour all the liquor into my sleeve.

Leonardus started as he beheld this frightful spectacle, and muttered to himself—"Thou hast indeed done penance, as it was fitting, for thou hast committed many crimes.—But Cyrillus—the good and pious Cyrillus!"—

He paused, and I took this opportunity of remarking, that the precise cause of my brother's death, and the accusation which had been made against him, remained, up to that day, unknown to me.

"Perhaps you too," said the Prior, "would have shared the same fate, if, like him, you had stepped forward as a plenipotentiary of our convent. You already know, that the claim of our house, if admitted, and carried into effect, would almost annihilate the income of the Cardinal von —; which income he at present draws without any right to its appropriation. This was the reason why the Cardinal suddenly made up a friendship with the Pope's father confessor, (with whom he had till then been at variance,) and thus acquired, in the Dominican, a powerful ally, whom he could employ against Cyrillus.

"The latter was introduced to the Pope, and received with particular favour; in such manner, that he was admitted into the society of the dignitaries by whom his Holiness is surrounded, and enabled to appear as often as he chose at the Vatican. Cyrillus, of course, soon became painfully aware, how much the Vicegerent of God seeks and finds his kingdom in this world, and its pleasures,—how he is made subservient as the mere tool of a mob of hypocrites, who turn him hither and thither, as if vacillating between heaven and hell. Doubtless this seems inconsistent with the powerful talents and energetic spirit, of which he has, on various occasions, shewn himself possessed; but which they contrive, by the most abominable means, to pervert and to subdue.

"Our pious brother Cyrillus, as might have been foreseen, was much distressed at all this, and found himself called on, by irresistible impulses, to avert, if possible, the misfortunes which might thus fall upon the church. Accordingly, as the spirit moved him, he took divers opportunities to rouse and agitate, by the most fervid eloquence, the heart of the Pope, and forcibly to disengage his soul from all terrestrial pleasures or ambition.

"The Pope, as it usually happens to enfeebled minds, was, in truth, much affected by what Cyrillus had said; and this was precisely the opportunity which his wicked ministers had watched for, in order to carry their plans into execution. With an air of great mystery and importance, they revealed to his Holiness their discovery of nothing less than a regular conspiracy against him, which was to deprive him of the triple crown. For this purpose, Cyrillus had been commissioned to deliver these private lectures, and induce the Pope to submit to some public act of penance, which would serve as a signal for the open out-break of the rebellion that was already organized among the cardinals.

"Accordingly, on the next appearance of our zealous and excellent brother, the Pope imagined that, in his present discourse, he could detect many concealed and treacherous designs. Cyrillus, however, did not hesitate to persist in his attempts, assuring his Holiness, that he who did not wholly renounce the pleasures of this world, and humble his heart, even as the most submissive and self-accusing penitent, was wholly unfit to be the Vicegerent of God, and would bring a load of reproach and shame on the church, from which the latter should make itself free.

"After one of these interviews, the iced-water which the Pope was in the habit of drinking, was found to have been poisoned. That Cyrillus was perfectly guiltless on that score, it is needless for me to make any assertion to you, who knew him. His Holiness, however, was convinced of his guilt; and the order for his imprisonment and execution in the Dominican Convent was the consequence.

"The hatred of the Dominicans towards you, after the attention which you had received from the Pope, and his intentions openly expressed of raising the Capuchin penitent to high dignities, requires no explanation. You had thus become more dangerous, in their estimation, than Cyrillus had ever been; and they would have felt the less remorse at your destruction, as they doubted not that your penitential observances were the result of the basest hypocrisy, and a desire of temporal advancement.

"With regard to my accurate knowledge of all that occurred to you in Rome, there is in this no mystery. I have a friend at the metropolis, who is thoroughly acquainted even with the most secret occurrences which take place in the Vatican, and who faithfully informs me of them by letters, written in a cypher which has hitherto baffled all attempts at discovery.

"But on my side, there are many questions to be asked, of which the solution yet appears to me an inscrutable mystery. When you lived at the Capuchin Convent, near to Rome, of which the Prior is my near relation, I believed that your penitence was genuine, and from the heart. Yet, in the city, you must have been actuated by very different motives. Above all, why did you seek to gain the Pope's attention by an incredible and marvellous story? Why accuse yourself of crimes which you had never committed? Were you, then, ever at the castle of the Baron von F—?"

"Alas, venerable father!" said I, "that was indeed the scene of my most horrible crimes. Is it possible that, in your eyes also, I have appeared a liar and hypocrite?"

"Truly," said the Prior, "now that I speak with, and see you, I am forced to believe that your repentance and self-inflicted sufferings have been sincere. Still there are difficulties, which I am wholly unable to clear up.

"Soon after your flight from the *residenz* of the Prince von Rosenthurm, and after the monk, with whom Cyrillus had confounded you, had, as if by miracle, escaped, it was proved by the discovery of letters, and other concomitant testimony, that the Count Victorin, disguised as a monk, had been at the Baron's castle, and must have been the perpetrator of the crimes charged against you. Reinhold, his old steward, indeed, vehemently disputed this notion. But suddenly Victorin's *chasseur* made his appearance, and explained that his master had lived long concealed in the Thuringian forest; that he had allowed his beard to grow, and had said that he would take the first opportunity of providing himself with a Capuchin tunic, which he intended to wear for at least twelve months, in order to carry on certain adventures. Finally, he declared, that, after having been for some days absent from his master, on business, he had, on his return, found him completely

disguised in a monk's dress, at which he was not surprised, as he, the day before, observed, at some distance, the figure of a Capuchin pilgrim in the forest, from whom he doubted not that his master had supplied himself with the masquerade attire. He insisted that he knew the Count far too well to have been deceived, and, besides, had spoken with him frequently betwixt the period of that occurrence and his disappearance from the castle. This deposition of the *chasseur* completely invalidated the opinion of Reinhold; but the utter vanishing of the Count, of whom not a single trace could be found, remained quite incomprehensible.

"In the *residenz*, the Princess von Rosenthurm started the hypothesis, that the pretended Herr von Krczinski, from Kwicziczwo, had been really the Count Victorin; and was the more inclined to this belief, on account of the resemblance that she had found between this pretender and Francesco, of whose guilt no one now entertained any doubt. The story of the Prince's forester, describing a maniac, who had wandered about in this forest, and afterwards lived in his house, almost sanctioned the hypothesis. The madman had been recognized as Medardus. Victorin, in order to possess himself of his tunic, had cast him down into the abyss below the Devil's Chair. Here, by some chance or other, he had not been killed in the fall, but only wounded on the head. The pain of his wound, with hunger and thirst, made him delirious; and he ran about, perhaps obtaining a morsel of food now and then from some compassionate countryman, and half clothed with miserable rags, till he was kindly received into the house of the forester.

"Two things, however, remained here inexplicable, namely, how this Medardus could have run away to such a distance out of the mountains without being arrested, and how, even in his lucid intervals, he should confess to the judges and the physician crimes which he had never committed. Hereupon some individuals insisted that these lucid intervals were delusive—that he never had been free from his madness, and that as there are no limits to the varieties of that malady, it was possible that he had, by the force of his own perverted imagination, invented all the circumstances which he related, and that the belief of them was the one, fixed, and obstinate idea, (the characteristic of insanity,) which never left him.

"The judge of the criminal court, on the other hand, (whose wisdom was held in great reverence,) declared that the pretended Herr von Krczinski was not only no Pole, but also no count, and certainly not the Count Victorin. Moreover, that the monk assuredly was, and continued mad on every occasion, on which account the Court had intended that his sentence should be that of constant imprisonment, in order that he might be prevented from committing more crimes; but the Prince, who was much shocked by the calamities brought on the family of the Baron von F—, changed this decision into that of execution on the scaffold.

"Such is the nature of mankind in this transitory life, that every impression, however vivid, loses, after a short time, almost all its influence, and fades away into pale and dusky colours. But now the notion that Aurelia's fugitive bridegroom had been Count Victorin, brought the story of the Italian Countess fresh into the remembrance of every one. Even those who before knew nothing of the matter, were informed by others who thought there was

no longer any need for keeping the secret, and all agreed in considering it quite natural that the features of Medardus should resemble those of Victorin, as they had both been sons of one father.

"The Prince at last determined that no farther attempt should be made to break the veil of mystery. He wished rather that all these unhappy involvements, which no one could be found to unravel, should be allowed to rest, and be forgotten. Only Aurelia—"

"Aurelia!" cried I, with vehemence, "for God's sake, reverend sir, tell me what has become of Aurelia?"

[14]

Chapter XX

*

"You are sincere, Medardus," said the Prior; "your silence on this point is to me better than the most fervid eloquence. I felt the most perfect conviction that it was you only who had in the *residenz* played the part of a Polish nobleman, and wished to marry the Baroness Aurelia. Moreover, I had traced out pretty accurately your route. A strange man, by name Schönfeld, or Belcampo, who called himself a professor and an artist, called here, and gave me the wished-for intelligence. At one period I was indeed quite convinced that you had been the murderer of Hermogen and Euphemia, on which account I entertained, if possible, the more horror at your plan of seizing and involving Aurelia in your own destruction.

"I might indeed have arrested you, and perhaps it was my duty to have done so; but, far from considering myself as a minister of vengeance, I resigned you and your earthly conduct to the eternal decrees and guidance of Providence. That you were, in a manner, little less than miraculously preserved and carried through so many dangers, proved to me, that your destruction, so far as this life is concerned, was not yet resolved.

"But now, it is most important for you to hear the circumstances by which I was afterwards led, and indeed forced to believe, that Count Victorin had actually appeared as the Capuchin, in the Thuringian mountains, at the castle of Baron von F—.

"Some time ago, Brother Sebastian, our porter, was awoke from his sleep by an extraordinary noise of sobbing and groaning at the gate, which sounded like the voice of a man in the last agony.

"The day had just dawned, and he immediately rose. On opening the outward gate, he found a man lying on the steps, half petrified with cold, and miserably exhausted. With great effort the stranger brought out the words, that he was Medardus, a monk who had fled from our monastery.

"Sebastian was much alarmed, and immediately came to me with accounts of what had happened below. I summoned the brethren around me, and went to inquire into the matter. The stranger seemed to have fainted, whereupon we lifted him up, and brought him into the refectorium. In spite of the horribly disfigured countenance of the man, we still thought that we could recognize your features. Indeed, several were of opinion that it was the change of dress, more than any other circumstance, which made a difference. The stranger had a long beard, like a monk, and wore a lay-habit, now much torn and destroyed, but which had at first been very handsome. He had silk stockings, a gold buckle still on one of his shoes, a white satin waistcoat—"

"A chesnut-coloured coat," interrupted I, "of the finest cloth; richly embroidered linen, and a plain gold ring upon his finger."

"Precisely so," said Leonardus; "but, in God's name, how could you know these particulars?"

Alas! it was the identical dress which I had worn on that fatal day of my marriage in the *residenz*. My horrible double again stood vividly before mine eyes. It was no longer the mere phantom of my own disturbed brain that had seemed to follow me through the woods, but the real and substantial madman, or demon, by whom my strength had been overpowered, and who had at last robbed me of my clothes, in order to represent me in this manner at the convent. I begged of Leonardus, that, before asking any other questions, he would proceed with his narrative, from which, perhaps, a perfect explanation of the mysteries in which I had been involved would at last dawn upon me.

"After a trial of several days," said Leonardus, "we began to perceive that the man was utterly and incurably mad; and, notwithstanding that his features resembled yours very closely, and he incessantly cried out, 'I am Medardus, and have come home to do penance among you,' we all concluded that this was but an obstinately fixed delusion of the maniac.

"To this change of opinion we were led by divers proofs. For example, we brought him into the church; where, as he endeavoured to imitate us in the usual devotional exercises, we perceived plainly that he had never before been in a convent. The question then always gained more and more influence over my mind—'What if this madman, who has, according to his own account, fled from the *residenz* of Rosenthurm, and escaped the punishment of the scaffold, were actually the Count Victorin?'

"The story which the maniac had before told to the forester was already known to me, but I was almost of opinion with the judge at Rosenthurm, that the discovery and drinking out of the Devil's Elixir, his residence in a convent, where he was condemned to prison, and all the rest, might be mere visions, the off-spring of his own malady, aided perhaps by some extraordinary magnetic influence of your mind over his—I was the more inclined to this notion, because the stranger had, in his paroxysms, often exclaimed that he was a Count, and a ruling sovereign. On the whole, I resolved, as he could have no claim on our care, to give him up to the hospital of St Getreu, where it was not impossible that the skill and tenderness with which he would be treated, might at last effect his recovery, after which his rational confessions might clear away that load of uncertainty under which we laboured.

"This resolution I had not time to put in practice. During the following night I was awoke by the great bell, which you know is rung whenever any one is taken dangerously ill and requires my assistance. On inquiry, I was informed that the stranger had asked for me so calmly and earnestly, that it was probable his madness had left him, and that he wished to confess. But, however this might be, his bodily weakness had so much increased, that it was scarcely possible for him to survive through the night.

"'Forgive me, venerable father,' said the stranger, after I had addressed to him a few words of pious admonition—'forgive me, that I have hitherto attempted to deceive you—I am not Medardus, the monk who fled from your convent, but the Count Victorin. *Prince*, indeed, I should be called, since I derive my birth from princes. This I advise you to notice, with due respect, otherwise my anger may yet overtake you!'

"'Even if you are a ruling prince,' said I, 'that circumstance, within our walls, and in your present condition, is not of any importance whatever; and it would, in my opinion, be much more suitable, and more for your own advantage, if you would now turn your thoughts altogether from such vain and terrestrial considerations.'

"At these words he stared on me, and his senses seemed wandering; but some strengthening drops having been administered, he revived, and began again to speak, though, to my great disappointment, in a style so wild and delirious, that his discourse scarce admits of repetition.

"'It seems to me,' said he, 'as if I must soon die, and that before leaving this world I must lighten my heart by confession. I know, moreover, that you have power over me; for, however you attempt to disguise yourself, I perceive very well that you are St Anthony, and you best know what misfortunes your infernal Elixirs have produced in this world. I had indeed grand designs in view when I first resolved to become a monk with a long beard, a shaven head, and a brown tunic tied with hair ropes. But, after long deliberation, it seemed to me as if my most secret thoughts played false with him to whom they owed their birth—as if they departed from me, and dressed themselves up in a cursed masquerade, representing MYSELF. I recognized the likeness —the identity—it was my *double*, and I was horrified.

"'This *double*, too, had superhuman strength, and hurled me down from the black rocks, through the trees and bushes, into the abyss, where a snow-white radiant princess rose out of the foaming water to receive me. She took me in her arms and bathed my wounds, so that I no longer felt any pain. I had now indeed become a monk, but that infernal second-self proved stronger than I was, and drove me on in the paths of wickedness, till I was forced to murder the princess that had rescued me, along with her only brother. I was then thrown into prison; but you yourself, St Anthony, know better than I, in what manner, after I had drunk up your cursed Elixir, you brought me out, and carried me away through the air.

"'The green forest king received me badly enough, although he knew very well that I was a prince, and therefore of equal rank; but my second-self interfered betwixt us, telling the king all sorts of calumnies against me, and insisted, that because we had committed these damnable crimes together, we must continue inseparable, and enjoy all things in partnership.

"'This happened accordingly, but when the king wanted to cut off our heads, we ran away, and on the road at last quarrelled and separated. I saw that this parasitical *double* had resolved on being perpetually nourished by my powerful spirit, though I had then not food enough for myself; and I therefore

knocked him down, beat him soundly, and took from him his coat.'

"So far the ravings of the man had some resemblance, however distant and shadowy, to the truth; but afterwards he lost himself in the sheer absurdities of his malady, out of which not a word could be understood. About an hour afterwards, as the first bell was rung for early prayers, he started up with a hideous cry, then fell back on his couch, and, as we all believed, instantly expired.

"Accordingly, I made the body be removed into the dead-room, and gave orders, that, after the usual interval, he should be buried, not in the convent vaults, but in a spot of consecrated ground in our garden. But you may well imagine our utter astonishment, when, on returning to the dead-room, we found that the supposed lifeless body was no longer to be seen! All inquiries after him were in vain, and I was obliged to despair of gaining any farther information as to the strange involvements that subsisted betwixt you and this man.

"No doubt, however, remained on my mind that he was Count Victorin. According to the story of the chasseur, he had murdered a Capuchin monk in the forest, and put on his tunic in order to carry on some intrigue in the castle. The crimes which he had thus begun, ended perhaps in a way that he did not expect—with the murder of the Baroness and of the young Baron Hermogen. Perhaps he was then mad, as Reinhold maintained, or became so upon his flight, being tormented by a reproving conscience. The dress which he wore, and the murder of the Capuchin, gave rise in his mind to the fixed delusion that he was a monk, and that his individuality was split into two hostile and contending powers.

"Only the period betwixt his flight from the Baron's castle and that of his arrival at the forester's house remains obscure. We know not how he could have lived all that time; nor is it conceivable how the story of his living in a convent, and being rescued from prison, had originated. Again, the time of his appearing to the forester will by no means answer with the date which Reinhold fixes for Victorin's departure from the Thuringian mountains."

"Stop, stop, father," said I; "every hope of obtaining, notwithstanding the fearful load of my crimes, forgiveness through the mercy and long-suffering of Heaven, must perish in my soul, if I do not, with the deepest repentance and self-condemnation, relate to you all the circumstances of my life, as I have before narrated them in holy confession!"

When I now went through this detail, the Prior's astonishment increased beyond all bounds. At last he said, "I must believe all that you have told, Medardus, if it were for no other reason than that, while you spoke, I perceived in your tone and looks the most unequivocal proofs of sincere and heartfelt repentance. Who can explain, but, at the same time, who can deny or disprove, the extraordinary mental sympathy and connection that has thus subsisted between two brothers, sons of a wretched sinner, and themselves both acted on and misled by the powers of darkness?*[15]*

"It is now certain that Victorin had rescued himself from the rocky abyss into which you had thrown him, (his fall probably having been broken by the water,) that he was the delirious monk whom the forester protected, who persecuted you as your *double*, and who died, or seemed to die, in our convent. He was an agent of our Arch-Enemy, placed in your way for the express purpose of misleading you from the path of virtue, or veiling from your sight that light of truth which otherwise might have dawned upon you. Or shall we look upon him not as Victorin, but as an incarnate demon, who, for his own hellish purposes, had availed himself of your unhappy brother's bodily frame?

"Alas! it is too true that the devil yet wanders restless and watchful through the earth, offering, as of yore, to unwary mortals, his deceitful Elixirs! Who is there that has not, at one period or another, found some of these deadly drinks agreeable and seductive to his taste? But such is the will of Heaven. Man must be subjected to temptations; and then, by the reproaches of his own conscience, being made aware of the dangers into which a moment of levity and relaxation has betrayed him, summon up strength and resolution to avoid such errors for the future. Thus, as the natural life of man is sometimes prolonged by poison, so the soul indirectly owes its final weal to the dark and destructive principle of evil.—Go now, Medardus, and join the brethren."

I was about to retire, but the Prior called me back.—"You have no doubt observed," said he, "the preparations for a great festival. The Baroness Aurelia is to-morrow to take the veil, and receives the conventual name of Rosalia!"

Chapter XXI

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The agitation which I felt at these words was indeed indescribable. As if struck by a thunderbolt, I had almost fallen to the ground, and could make no answer. Hereupon the Prior seemed greatly incensed.—"Go to your brethren!" said he, in a tone of sternness and anger;—and I tottered away, almost senseless, or totally unable to analyze my own sensations, to the refectorium, where the monks were assembled.

Here I was assailed by a storm of anxious inquiries; but I was no longer able to utter a single word on the adventures of my own life. Only the bright and beaming form of Aurelia came vividly before mine eyes, and all other imagery of the past faded into obscurity. Under pretext of having devotional duties to perform, I left the brethren, and betook myself to the chapel, which lay at the further extremity of the extensive convent garden. Here I wished to pray; but the slightest noise, even the light rustling of the wind among the faded leaves, made me start up, and broke every pious train of contemplation.

"It is she—I shall see her again!—Aurelia comes!"—In these words a voice seemed to address me, and my heart was at once agitated with fear and with rapture. It seemed to me as if indeed at some distance I heard the sounds of soft whispering voices. I started up, left the chapel, and, behold! there were two nuns walking through an *allée* of lime trees, and between them a person in the dress of a novice. Certainly that was Aurelia. My limbs were seized with a convulsive shuddering; my heart beat so violently, that I could hardly breathe; and I wished to go from the place; but, being unable to walk, I fell, not fainting, but overcome with the vehemence of my internal conflict, powerless to the ground. The nuns, and with them the novice, vanished into the thickets.

What a day and what a night I had to encounter! I strove to diversify the emotions under which I laboured, by a visit to the house in which my mother had lived; but, alas! it no longer existed. The garden—the tower—the old castle—all were gone; and the ground on which they once stood had been converted, by a new proprietor, into a ploughed field. I was but slightly affected by this change, for my whole heart and soul were devoted to that one object. I wandered about repeating her name—"Aurelia! Aurelia!" This distraction continued also through the long night. There was, for the time, no other thought—no other image, but hers, that could gain any influence over my attention.

As soon as the first beams of the morning had begun to break through the autumnal wreaths of white vapour that hovered in the valley, the convent bells rung to announce the festival of a nun's investiture and dedication. Soon afterwards, the brethren assembled in the great public hall, where, too, in a

short time, the Abbess appeared, attended by two of her sisterhood.

Undescribable was the feeling which filled my heart, when I once more beheld her, who, towards my father, had been so deeply attached, and, after he had through his crimes broken off a union which promised him every happiness, had yet transferred her unconquerable affection to his son.

That son she had endeavoured to rear up to a life of virtue and piety; but, like his father, he heaped up crime on crime, so that every hope of the adoptive mother, who wished to find in the one consolation for the profligacy of the other, was annihilated.

With my head hung downwards, and eyes fixed on the ground, I listened to the discourse, wherein the Abbess once more formally announced to the assembled monks, Aurelia's entrance into the Cistertian Convent; and begged of them to pray zealously at the decisive moment of the last vow, in order that the Arch-Fiend might not have any power at that time to torment the pious virgin, by his abominable delusions.—"Heavy and severe," said she, "were the trials which this young woman had already to resist. There was no method of temptation which the great adversary of mankind did not employ, in order to lead her unawares into the commission of sins, from which she should awake when it was too late, as if from a hideous dream, to perish in shame and despair!

"Yet Omnipotence protected this truly pious votary of the church; and if on this day, too, the adversary should approach her, and once more aim at her destruction, her history now will be the more glorious. I request, then, your most zealous prayers—not that this chosen votary may be firm and unchanged in her resolve, for her mind has long been devoted wholly to Heaven; but that no earthly misfortune may interrupt the solemn act of her investiture, or disturb her thoughts in that sacred act. I must confess that a mysterious timidity—an apprehension, has got possession of my mind, for which I am unable to account, but which I have no power of resisting."

Hereupon it became clear and obvious, that the Abbess alluded to me alone, as that evil adversary—that destructive demon, who would probably interrupt the ceremony. She had heard of my arrival, and, being aware of my previous history, had imagined that I came with the fixed intention of committing some new crime to prevent Aurelia from taking the veil. The consciousness how groundless were these suspicions, and of the change which my mind had undergone, caused, for the moment, a sinful feeling of self-approbation, which I ought to have repressed, but which, like other vices, obtained a victory before I was on my guard. The Abbess did not vouchsafe towards me a single look, or the slightest sign of recognition. Hereupon I felt once more that proud spirit of scorn and defiance, by which I had been formerly actuated towards the Princess in the *residenz*; and when the Abbess spoke these words, instead of wishing, as of yore, to humble myself before her in the dust, I could have walked up to her, and said:—

"Wert thou then always so pure and elevated in soul, that the pleasures of terrestrial life never had for thee any attraction? When thou daily sawest my father, wert thou so well guarded by devotion, that sinful thoughts never

entered into thy mind? Or, when adorned with the *infula* and crosier, in all thy conventual dignity, did his image never wake within thee a longing desire to return into the world? Hast thou contended with the dark powers as I have done? Or canst thou flatter thyself with having gained a true victory, if thou hast never been called into a severe combat? Deem not thyself so proudly elevated that thou canst despise him, who submitted indeed to the most powerful of enemies, yet again raised himself up by deep repentance, and the severest penance."

The sudden and demoniacal change that I had undergone, must have been visible in my exterior looks and deportment; for the brother who was next to me, inquired, "What is the matter with you, Brother Medardus? Why do you cast such angry looks towards the truly sanctified Abbess?"

"Ay, indeed," answered I, almost audibly; "she may indeed be sanctified, for she carried her head always so high, that the contamination of profane life could not reach her; and yet, methinks, she appears to me at this moment less like a Christian saint than a pagan priestess, who, with the bloody knife in her hand, prepares to immolate before an idol her human victim!"

I know not how I came to pronounce these blasphemous words, which were out of the track of my previous ideas, but with them arose in my mind a multitude of the most horrible and distracting images, which seemed to unite and harmonize together, as if for the purpose of gaining more strength, and effectually obtaining the victory over any degree of rational self-possession I had left.

Aurelia was for ever to forsake and renounce this world!—She was to bind herself, as I had done, by a vow, that appeared to me only the invention of religious fanaticism, to renounce all earthly enjoyments! Old impressions, which I had believed for ever lost, revived on me with tenfold strength and influence. My attention was again wholly engrossed by the one idea, that Aurelia and the monk should yet be united, though it were but for a moment, and then perish together, a sacrifice to the subterranean powers of darkness. Nay, like a hideous spectre, like Satan himself, the thought of murder once more rose on my mind. I beheld myself with the bloody dagger in my hand! —Alas, poor blinded wretch! I did not perceive that at the moment when I had conceived such resentment against the Abbess for her supposed allusions, I was given up a prey to perhaps the severest trial to which the power of the devil had ever subjected me, and by which I was to be enticed to the most hideous crime of which I had yet even dreamed!

The brother to whom I had spoken looked at me terrified. "For the love of God, and all the saints," said he, "what words are you muttering there?" The Abbess was now about to leave the hall. On her retreat, her eyes accidentally encountered mine. I perceived that she immediately grew pale, that she tottered, and must lean on the attendant nuns. Methought also I could distinguish the words,—"Merciful Heaven, my worst fears then are confirmed!"

Soon after, she summoned the Prior Leonardus to a private audience; but, meanwhile, the bells were again rung, and with them was united the deep

thundering notes of the organ. The consecration anthem was just begun, and was distinctly heard from the church, when the Prior returned into the hall. Now the monks of the different orders arranged themselves all in solemn processions, and advanced towards the church, which was now just as crowded as it used formerly to be at the anniversary of the blessed St Bernard. On the right side of the high altar, which was richly adorned with red and white roses, were elevated seats placed for the clergy opposite to the tribune, whereon the Bishop's *capelle* performed the music of the high mass, at which he himself was the officiating priest.

One of the monks with whom I had formerly been acquainted, and to whom probably Leonardus had given directions, called me to take my place next to him. I perceived that he watched even my slightest movements, and he insisted that I should pray without ceasing out of my Breviary.

The decisive moment was now drawing near. The nuns of St Clare assembled themselves within the small square, enclosed by an iron railing, before the high altar, while, through a private door from behind the altar, the Cistertians brought forward Aurelia.

A whispering rustled through the crowded church on her appearance; the organ was silent, and only the simple anthem of the nuns in the choir vibrated to the very heart of every listener. Till now, I had not ventured to lift up mine eyes, and on doing so, I trembled convulsively, so that my Breviary fell to the ground. I bent down to take it up, but a sudden giddiness seized me, and I should have fallen after my book, had not my watchful brother seized and held me back. "What is the matter with you, Medardus?" said he—"Resist the demon that besets you, and he will flee!"

I made a violent effort to be tranquil, looked up again, and saw Aurelia kneeling at the high altar. Oh, heavens! her beauty of countenance, and symmetry of form, were more than ever dazzling and seductive! She was dressed, too, as a bride, precisely as she had been on that fatal day of our intended marriage, with wreaths of myrtle and roses twisted in her luxuriant and skilfully-plaited hair. The devotion—the solemnity and agitation of the moment, had heightened the bloom on her cheeks; and in her eyes, uplifted to heaven, lay an expression of desire, which, in another place, or on another occasion, might have been very differently interpreted.

What were those moments, after I had recognized Aurelia at the *residenz* of the Prince von Rosenthurm, compared to this? I said that my feelings then were indescribable, but my passions now raged and burned within me with a violence which I had never before known. Every vein and fibre in my frame was convulsed and swollen by the vehemence of my conflict, and I grasped the reading-desk with such force, that the boards cracked and broke beneath the pressure.

Meanwhile, I prayed internally with great fervour—"Oh, merciful Heaven—Oh, ye blessed saints, intercede for me!—Let me not become mad!—only not mad!—Save me—save me from this hellish torment!—Save me from utter frenzy, otherwise I must commit the most horrible of crimes, and give up my soul to everlasting destruction!" Such were my inward aspirations, for I felt

how every moment the evil spirit was acquiring more and more an ascendancy over me. It seemed to me as if Aurelia, too, had a share in the crime which I alone was committing, as if the vow that she was about to take was *not* to be the bride of Heaven, but to become *mine*! To rush up to the altar, to press her in my arms in one last delicious embrace, and then stab her to the heart—this impulse became almost irresistible. The demon raged more and more wildly in my heart—I was about to scream out, "Stop there, deluded fools!—Not a virgin, as you believe, pure and emancipated from earthly bonds and passion, but the devoted bride of the perjured monk, would you consecrate to Heaven!"

When I heard Aurelia's voice, however, as she began to pronounce the vow, then it seemed as if a mild gleam of moonlight broke through the dark and stormy clouds by which my reason had been obscured. By this pure light I detected all the artifices of my relentless adversary, whom I was thus, with tenfold vigour, enabled to resist. Every word uttered by Aurelia, like the encouraging voice of a guardian seraph, gave me new strength, and, after an arduous conflict, I was left victor. That black and hideous impulse to new crimes was put to flight, and with it every remains of sinful passion. Aurelia was again the pious votary of Heaven, whose prayer could rescue me from eternal remorse and destruction. Her vows were to me the source of consolation and of hope; I could look again without despair into the blue unclouded vaults of heaven! The monk who had watched over me, immediately perceived this change. "Thou hast bravely resisted the adversary, Medardus. This was perhaps the last and severest trial which has been destined for thee by the will of the Almighty!"

Chapter XXII

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The vow was now pronounced, and during that part of the service consisting of question and response, sung by the nuns of St Clare, the veil was to be laid on Aurelia. Already they had taken the myrtles and roses from her head, and were in the act of cutting off her long and luxuriant locks, when an extraordinary tumult arose in the church. I remarked how the people who stood in the aisles were thrust and driven about. Many of them, too, were violently knocked down, and the disturbance made its way always nearer and nearer, till it arrived at the centre of the church, before which time I could not distinguish the cause.

With the most furious looks and gestures, striking with his clenched fists at all who stood in his way, and still pressing forward, there now appeared a half-naked man, with the rags of a Capuchin dress hung about his body! At the first glance, I recognized my diabolical *double*; but already at the moment when, anticipating some horrible event, I was in the act of leaving the gallery to throw myself in his way, the horrible wretch had leaped over the railing of the altar. The terrified nuns shrieked and dispersed, but the Abbess undauntedly held Aurelia firmly clasped in her arms. "Ha, ha, ha!" screamed the madman in a thrilling tone, "would'st thou rob me of my Princess?—Ha, ha, ha!—The Princess is my bride, my bride!"

With these words he tore the fainting Aurelia from the Abbess, and with incredible quickness pulled out a stiletto, elevated it high over her head, and then plunged it into her heart, so that the blood sprung in torrents from the wound.—"Hurrah!—hurrah!" cried the maniac; "now have I won my bride—have won the Princess!" With these words he rushed through the private grating behind the altar, and disappeared.

The church-aisles and vaults reverberated with the deafening shrieks of the nuns, and outcries of the people.—"Murder!—Murder at the altar of the Lord!" cried they, crowding to the spot.

"Watch all the gates of the convent, that the murderer may not escape!" cried Leonardus, in a loud voice; and many accordingly left the church, seizing the staves and crosiers that had been used in the procession, and rushing after the monster through the aisles of the convent.

All was the transaction of a moment, and soon after, I was kneeling beside Aurelia, the nuns having, as well as they could, bound up her wound, while others assisted the now fainting Abbess.

"*Sancta Rosalia, ora pro nobis!*" I heard these words spoken near me in a powerful and steadfast voice; and all who yet remained in the church cried

out, "A miracle!—A miracle!—She is indeed a martyr! *Sancta Rosalia, ora pro nobis!*"

I looked up, the old painter stood near, but with a mild earnestness on his features, precisely as when he had appeared to me in the prison. It seemed to me already as if every earthly tie was broken. I felt no pain at the fate of Aurelia, nor could I now experience any apprehension or horror from the apparition of the painter. It seemed, on the contrary, as if the mysterious nets, by which the powers of hell had so long held me entangled, were now completely dissolved and broken.

"A miracle!—A miracle!" shouted again all the people. "Do you see the old man in the violet-coloured mantle? He has descended out of the picture over the high altar!—I saw it!"

"I too!"—"And I too!" cried many confused voices, till again all fell upon their knees, and the tumult subsided into the murmur of zealous prayer, interrupted occasionally by violent sobbing and weeping.

The Abbess at last awoke from her faint.—"Aurelia!" cried she, with the heart-rending tone of deep and violent grief,—"Aurelia, my child! my pious daughter! But why do I complain?—Almighty Heaven, it was thy resolve!"

A kind of bier, or couch, tied on hand-poles, was now brought, on which Aurelia was to be placed. When she was lifted up for this purpose, she opened her eyes, and seeing me beside her, "Medardus," said she, "thou hast indeed submitted to the temptation of our adversary. But was I then pure from the contamination of sin, when I placed in my affection for thee all my hopes of earthly happiness? An immutable decree of Providence had resolved that we should be the means of expiating the heavy crimes of our ancestors, and thus we were united by a bond of love, whose proper throne is beyond the stars, and the enjoyment of whose votaries partakes nothing in common with terrestrial pleasure.

"But our watchful and cunning adversary succeeded but too well in concealing from us altogether this true interpretation of our attachment—nay, in such manner to delude and entice us, that we only construed and exemplified that which was in its nature heavenly and spiritual, by means earthly and corporeal.

"Alas! was it not I myself, who, in the confessional, betrayed to you my affection, which afterwards, instead of kindling within you the celestial flames of heavenly and everlasting love, degenerated into the fire of selfish and impure passion, which afterwards you endeavoured to quench by unheard-of and enormous crimes? But, Medardus, be of good courage. The miserable maniac, whom our Arch-Adversary has deluded into the belief that he is transformed into thee, and must fulfil what thou hadst begun, is but the mere tool or implement of that higher Power, through which the intentions of the latter are fulfilled. Soon, very soon—"

Here Aurelia, who had spoken the last words with her eyes closed, and a voice scarcely audible, fell again into a faint, yet death could not yet triumph

over her. Indeed, all that she had said was but in fragments and single words, so broken and disjointed, that it was with much difficulty the sense could be collected, which I have above put together.

"Has she confessed to you, reverend sir?" said the nuns. "Have you consoled her?"—"By no means," said I; "she has indeed poured consolation on my mind, but I am unable to aid her!"

"Happy art thou, Medardus! Thy trials will soon be at an end, and I then am free!"

It was the painter who still stood near me, and who had spoken these last words. I went up to him, and began,—"Forsake me not, then, thou wonderful and miraculous man, but remain ever with me!" I know not how my senses, when I wished to speak farther, became, in the strangest manner, confused and lost. I could not bring out a word, but fell into a state betwixt waking and dreaming, out of which I was roused by loud shouts and outcries.

I now no longer saw the painter. My attention was directed only to a crowd of countrymen, citizens from the town, and soldiers, who had forced their way into the church, and insisted that it should be allowed them to search through every apartment of the convent, as the murderer certainly must be still within its walls. The Abbess, who was afraid of the disorders that would ensue, refused this; but, notwithstanding the influence of her high dignity, she could not appease the minds of the people. They reproached her, on the contrary, with a wish to conceal the murderer, because he was a monk, and, raging more violently, threatened to force for themselves that admittance which she had refused.

Leonardus then mounted the pulpit, and after a few words of admonishment, on the sin of profaning a sanctuary by such tumult, he assured them that the murderer was by no means a monk, but a madman, whom he himself had taken out of compassion into his convent, where he had, to all appearance, died; but, after being carried to the dead-room, had unaccountably recovered from his supposed death, and escaped, taking with him an old tunic, which, at his earnest request, had been charitably lent to him during his stay in the monastery. If he were now concealed anywhere within these walls, it would be impossible for him, after the precautions that had been taken, to make his escape. The crowd were at last quieted, and permitted the removal of Aurelia.

It was found that the bier on which she was placed could not be carried through the wicket-door behind the altar. It was, therefore, brought in solemn procession through the aisle of the church, and across the court, into the convent. The Abbess, supported by two nuns, walked close behind the bier. Four Cistertian sisters carried over it a canopy, and all the rest followed,—then the brethren of the different orders, and lastly the people, who now behaved with the most respectful silence. The bier was covered with roses and myrtle wreaths; and thus the procession moved slowly on.

The sisters who belonged to the choir must have returned to their station; for as we reached the middle of the long and spacious aisle, deep fearful tones of the organ sounded mournfully from above. Then, lo! as if awoke by those

notes, Aurelia once more raised herself slowly up, and lifted her clasped hands in fervent prayer to Heaven. Again the people fell upon their knees, and called out, "*Sancta Rosalia, ora pro nobis!*" Thus was the vision realized, which, at my first meeting with Aurelia, I had announced, though then actuated only by base and devilish hypocrisy.

The bier was first set down in the great hall of the convent; and as the nuns and the brethren formed a circle, and prayed around her, she suddenly fell into the arms of the Abbess, with a long deep sigh. She was dead!

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The multitude were still gathered round the gates, and when the bell announced to them the death of the consecrated virgin, all broke out into new lamentations. Many of them made a vow to remain in the village till after the funeral of Aurelia, and to devote that period to fasting and prayer. The rumour of this fearful event was rapidly spread abroad, so that Aurelia's obsequies, which were solemnized four days thereafter, resembled one of the highest festivals of the church on the canonization of a saint. As formerly, on St Bernard's eve, the convent lawn was covered with a great crowd from the town of Königswald, and from all quarters; but there was no longer to be heard among them the wonted voice of mirth. Their time was spent in sighs and tears; and if a voice was raised aloud, it was but to utter execrations against the murderer, who had supernaturally vanished, nor could a trace of him be discovered. Far deeper was the influence of these three days (which I spent mostly in the garden-chapel) on the weal of my soul, than my long laborious penitence in the Capuchin Convent of Rome. When I reflected on my past life, I perceived plainly how, although armed and protected from earliest youth with the best lessons of piety and virtue, I had yet, like a pusillanimous coward, yielded to Satan, whose aim was to foster and cherish the criminal race, from which I was sprung, so that its representatives might still be multiplied, and still fettered by bonds of vice and wickedness upon the earth. My sins were but trifling and venial when I first became acquainted with the choir-master's sister, and first gave way to the impulses of pride and self-confidence. But, alas! I was too careless to remember the doctrine which I had yet often inculcated on others, that *venial* errors, unless immediately corrected, form a sure and solid foundation for sins which are *mortal*. Then the Devil threw that Elixir into my way, which, like a poison working against the soul instead of the body, completed his victory over me. I heeded not the earnest admonitions of the unknown painter, the Abbess, or the Prior.

Aurelia's appearance at the confessional was a decisive effort for my destruction. Then, as the body, under the influence of poison, falls into disease, so my spirit, under the operation of that hellish cordial, was infected and destroyed by sin. How could the votary, the slave of Satan, recognize the true nature of those bonds by which Omnipotence, as a symbol of that eternal love, (whose marriage festival is death,) had joined Aurelia's fate and mine?

Rejoicing in his first victories, Satan then haunted me in the form of an accursed madman, between whose spirit and mine there seemed to be a reciprocal and alternate power of influencing each other. I was obliged to

ascribe his apparent death (of which I in reality was guiltless) to myself; and thus became familiarized with the thought of murder. Or was Victorin really killed, and did the Arch-Fiend re-animate his body, (as the vampyres in Hungary rise from the grave,) for his own especial purposes? May it not suffice to say, that this brother, called Victorin, who derived his birth from an accursed and abominable crime, became to me an impersonization of the evil principle, who forced me into hideous guilt, and tormented me with his unrelenting persecution?

Till that very moment when I heard Aurelia pronounce her vows, my heart was not yet pure from sin; not till then had the Evil One lost over me his dominion; but the wonderful inward tranquillity—the cheerfulness as if poured from Heaven into my heart, when she addressed to me her last words, convinced me that her death was the promise of my forgiveness and reconciliation. Then, as in the solemn requiem, the choir sung the words —"*Confutatis maledictis, flammis acribus addictis*," I trembled; but at the passage, "*Voca me cum benedictis*," it seemed to me as if I beheld, in the dazzling radiance of celestial light, Aurelia, who first looked down with an expression of saintly compassion upon me, and then lifting up her head, which was surrounded with a dazzling ring of stars, to the Almighty, preferred an ardent supplication for the deliverance of my soul! At the words, "*Ora supplex et acclinis cor contritum, quasi cinis*," I sank down into the dust; but how different now were my inward feelings of humility and submission, from that *passionate* self-condemnation, those cruel and violent penances, which I had formerly undergone at the Capuchin Convent!

Now, for the first time, my spirit was enabled to distinguish truth from falsehood, and by the new light, which was then shed around me, every temptation of the devil must, from henceforward, remain vain and ineffectual. It was not Aurelia's death, but the cruel and horrible manner in which it had occurred, by which I had been at first so deeply agitated. But how short was the interval, ere I perceived and recognized in its fullest extent, even in this event, the goodness and mercy of Heaven! The martyrdom of the pious, the tried, and absolved bride! Had she then died for my sake? No! It was not till now, after she had been withdrawn from this world, that she appeared to me like a dazzling gleam, sent down from the realms of eternal love, to brighten the path of an unhappy sinner. Aurelia's death was, as she had before said, our marriage festival, the solemnization of that love, which, like a celestial essence, has its throne and dominion above the stars, and admits nought in common with grovelling and perishable earthly pleasures! These thoughts indeed raised me above myself; and accordingly these three days in the Cistertian Convent might truly be called the happiest of my life.

After the funeral obsequies, which took place on the fourth day, Leonardus was on the point of returning with the brethren home to his own convent. When their procession was ready to set out, the Abbess summoned me to a private audience. I found her alone, in her high vaulted parlour, the same room wherein I had my first introduction, and which then inspired me with such awe and terror. She was now in the greatest emotion, and tears burst involuntarily from her eyes.

"Son Medardus!" said she, "for I can again address you thus, all now is known and explained to me, so that I have no questions to ask. You have at last survived the temptations by which, unhappy and worthy to be pitied, you were assailed and overtaken! Alas, Medardus, only she, *she* alone, who intercedes for us at the judgment throne of Heaven, is pure from sin. Did I not stand on the very brink of the abyss, when, with a heart given up to the allurements of earthly pleasure, I was on the point of selling myself to a murderer? And yet, son Medardus, and yet I have wept sinful tears in my lonely cell, when thinking of your father! Go then, in God's name. Every apprehension by which I have often been assailed, that in you I had reared and educated even the most wicked of the race, is banished from my soul. Farewell!"

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Leonardus, who had no doubt revealed to the Abbess whatever circumstances of my life remained yet unknown to her, proved to me by his conduct that he also had forgiven me, and recommended me in his prayers to Heaven. The old regulations of the conventual life remained unbroken, and I was allowed to take my place, on an equal footing with the brethren, as formerly.

One day the Prior desired to speak with me. "Brother Medardus," said he, "I should like still to impose upon you one act of penitence."—I humbly inquired wherein this was to consist. "I advise you," answered Leonardus, "to commit to paper a history of your life. In your manuscript do not leave out any incident—not only of those which are leading and important, but even such as are comparatively insignificant. Especially, detail at great length whatever happened to you in the varied scenes of the profane world. Your imagination will probably by this means carry you back into that life which you have now for ever renounced. All that was absurd or solemn, mirthful or horrible, will be once more vividly impressed on your senses; nay, it is possible, that you may for a moment look upon Aurelia, not as a nun and a martyr, but as she once appeared in the world. Yet if the Evil One has wholly lost his dominion over you; if you have indeed turned away your affections from all that is terrestrial, then you will hover, like a disengaged spirit, as if on seraph's wings, above all these earthly remembrances, and the impression thus called up will vanish without leaving any trace behind."

I did as the Prior had commanded; and, alas! the consequences were such as he had desired me to expect. A tempest of conflicting emotions, of pain and pleasure, of desire, and abhorrence, rose in my heart as I revived the circumstances of my life. Thou, to whom I have already addressed myself, who mayest one day read these pages, I spoke to thee more than once of the highest meridian sun-light of love, when Aurelia's image arose in all its celestial beauty on my soul. But there is a love far different from terrestrial passion, (which last generally works its own destruction.)—There is another and far different love, and in *this* may be truly found that meridian sun-light which I described, when, far removed above the influences of earthly desire, the beloved object, like a gleam from heaven, kindles in thy heart all the highest, the holiest, and most blissful inspirations which are shed down from

the realms of the saints on poor mortals. By this thought have I been refreshed and comforted, when, on my remembrance of the most seductive moments which this world bestowed on me, tears yet gushed from mine eyes, and wounds, long cicatrized, broke open and bled anew.

I know that probably in the hour of death the adversary will yet have power to torment me. But steadfastly, and with fervent longing, I wait for the moment which is to withdraw me from this life; for it is on that event that the fulfilment of all that Aurelia, all that the blessed St Rosalia, has promised to me, depends. Pray—pray for me, oh, ye beatified Virgin! in that dark hour, that the powers of hell, to which I have so often yielded, may not once more, and for the last time, conquer me, and tear me with him to the abyss of everlasting destruction!

Chapter XXIII

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Additions by Father Spiridion, Librarian of the Capuchin Monastery at Königswald.

In the night of the 3d-4th September, in this year 17—, much that is worthy of being recorded has happened in our monastery. It might be about midnight, when, in the cell of Brother Medardus, which was next to mine, I overheard a strange noise of stammering and laughing, which continued for a considerable time; and at intervals I heard also obscure sounds of lamentation, sobbing, and groaning. It seemed to me as if I could distinguish the articulate accents of a most disagreeable broken voice, from which I involuntarily recoiled and shuddered, and which pronounced the words "*Brüd-er-lein! Brüd-er-lein!*—Come with me—Come with me.—The bride is here—The bride is here!"—I immediately started up, and wished to inquire for Brother Medardus; but then there fell upon me an unaccountable and supernatural horror, so that my limbs shook and my jaws clattered, as if in the cold fit of an ague. Thereafter, I went not into the cell of Brother Medardus, but to the Prior, and, with some trouble, woke him from his sleep. The Prior was much alarmed by my description of what I had heard, and desired me to bring consecrated candles, and then we should both go to the assistance of Medardus. I did as he commanded me, lighted the candles at the lamp beside the image of the blessed Virgin in the aisle, and we went along the corridor, till we came near the cell. There Leonardus stood for some time, listening at the door; but the voice which I had described to him was no longer to be heard. On the contrary, we observed a pleasant silvery sound, as of the ringing of bells, and methought the air was filled with the fragrance of roses. Leonardus was about to enter, when the door opened, and lo! there stepped forth the form of a very tall man, with a long white beard, attired in a dark violet-coloured mantle. I was indescribably terrified, knowing well that this must be a supernatural apparition, for the convent gates were all firmly locked, and it was impossible for any stranger, without my knowledge, to have gained admittance. Leonardus, however, looked at him boldly, though without uttering a word. "The hour of fulfilment is not far distant," said the figure, in a tone very hollow and solemn. With these words he vanished in the obscurity of the corridor, so that my fear was greatly increased, and I had almost let the candles fall out of my hand. The Prior, who, by his extreme piety and strength of faith, is wholly protected from any such fear of ghosts, took me by the arm. "Now," said he, "let us go, and speak with Brother Medardus." We entered accordingly, and found our brother, who for some time past had been in very weak health, already dying. He could no longer speak, and breathed with great difficulty. The Prior assisted him; and I went to ring the great bell, and awaken the brethren. "Rise up—rise up," cried I in a loud voice; "Brother Medardus is on the point of death." They all attended

on the instant, so that not one of our number was wanting, and stood, with consecrated candles in their hands, round the couch of the dying man, every one feeling for him deep regret and compassion. Leonardus commanded that he should be laid on a bier, carried down to the church, and placed before the high altar, which was accordingly done. There, to our utter astonishment, he recovered, and began to speak. Leonardus, after confession and absolution had been regularly gone through, administered the last unction. Thereupon, while the Prior continued with the dying man, consoling and supporting him, we betook ourselves to the choir, and sang the usual dirge for the soul's weal of our departing brother. On the following day, namely, on the 5th September, 17—, exactly as the convent clock struck twelve, Brother Medardus expired in the arms of the Prior. We remarked that it was precisely on the same day, and at the same hour, in the preceding year, that the nun Rosalia, in a horrible manner, just after she had taken the vows, had been murdered.

At the funeral, during the requiem also, the following circumstance occurred. We perceived that the air was strongly perfumed by roses, and on looking round, saw, that to the celebrated picture of St Rosalia's martyrdom, painted by an old unknown Italian artist, (which was purchased for a large sum by our convent, in Rome,) there was a large garland affixed, of the finest and freshest roses, which at this late season had become very rare. The porter said, that early in the morning a ragged, very miserable-looking beggar, unobserved by any of us, had climbed up to the picture, and hung on it this wreath. The same beggar made his appearance before the funeral was over, and forced his way among the brethren. We intended to order him away; but when Leonardus had sharply looked at, and seemed to recognize him, he was allowed, by the Prior's order, to remain. He was afterwards, by his earnest entreaty, received as a lay-monk into the convent, by the name of Brother Peter, as he had been in the world called Peter Schönfeld; and we granted him this honoured name so much the more readily, as he was always very quiet and well-behaved, only now and then made strange grimaces, and laughed very absurdly, which, however, as it could not be called sinful, only served for our diversion. The Prior said, that Brother Peter's intellectual light was quenched and obscured by the vapours of folly, so that nothing in this world appeared to him without being strangely caricatured and metamorphosed. We scarcely understood what the learned Prior meant by these allusions, but perceived that he had known something of the former life of our lay-brother Peter, which induced him charitably to admit the poor man among us.

Thus to the manuscript, which is said to contain an account of our late brother's life, (but which I have not read,) I have added, not without labour, and all to the greater glory of God and our religion, this circumstantial history of his death. Peace to the soul of Medardus, and may the Almighty one day call him to a blessed resurrection, and receive him into the choir of the saints, for his death was indeed very pious!

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Endnotes

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[1] Balcony or Platform.

[2] A few sentences are here left out by the Editor.

[3] One page is here left out by the Editor.

[4] At this point the Editor recommences his transcription.

[5] Balcony.

[6] Hunting-song.

[7] This is exemplified in the (old) royal palace at Berlin.

[8] Little brother. One of the German diminutives of familiarity or endearment.

[9] Long black robe.

[10] Aurelia's letter is very long, and contains a recapitulation, in a diffuse rambling style, of events that are already known to the reader. In the first place, there is her interview with Medardus in the church, which has been described already in the first volume of these Memoirs. After this, it appears that Aurelia was seized by a long and dangerous illness, by which her passion for Medardus was, for a time, completely subdued and alienated. To this change his vehement exhortation to her in the confessional had also contributed; but, for the future, she looked on the whole transaction as a dream, with which she had been visited, in order that her eyes should be opened to the errors into which she had, by a youthful imagination, been led.

Secondly, there is a full explanation of her conduct at the time when Medardus appeared at the castle of her father the Baron von F—. Though she at once recognized the former object of her affections, yet, with an unshaken perseverance, she persisted in her determination, on no occasion whatever to betray this recognition. Many times, however, she now underwent severe conflicts on account of a transient recurrence of her not yet wholly conquered passion; but against these her mind was fortified by the constant presence and advice of Hermogen.

Thirdly, and lastly, comes a detail of recent circumstances which are already sufficiently intelligible. No sooner had Medardus, in consequence of Aurelia's

representations, been thrown into prison, and, by the opinion of every one, already prejudged to the scaffold, than she became dreadfully agitated; and, although conscious that her conduct was but the fulfilment of imperious duty, and feeling the utmost abhorrence for him as a criminal, yet with these feelings was blended a share of compassion, so that she almost regretted what she had done. At this period, the discovery of the insane monk, in whom Cyrillus recognized the true Medardus—the proofs received from Posen, that the individual who had, in consequence of her accusations, been imprisoned, was a Polish nobleman, and never had been a monk—effected an entire revolution in her mind. Regret for the sufferings which she had so unwarrantably inflicted, led naturally to the revival of her early passion, which had now found a legitimate and innocent object.

She dwells with satisfaction on many attributes of character and demeanour, in which her beloved Leonard differs from, and contrasts with, the detestable monk, by whom her brother had been put to death. Only the adventure at the Princess's country-house had, for a time, broken in upon this confidence, and given rise to many harassing doubts and fears, with an oppressive feeling of mystery, by which her mind is still clouded, and against which she earnestly entreats the prayers and maternal blessing of the Abbess for herself and her betrothed husband.

[11] Beet-roots.

[12] Blockhead.

[13] The Editor has here left out two or three pages of this conversation, as it seems irrelevant to the general tenure of the narrative.

[14] Some pages are here left out by the Editor.

[15] According to the devil's assertion, if two individuals should drink out of the same flask, they would henceforth possess a wonderful reciprocity of thoughts and feelings, though mutually and unconsciously acting for the destruction of each other.—Editor.